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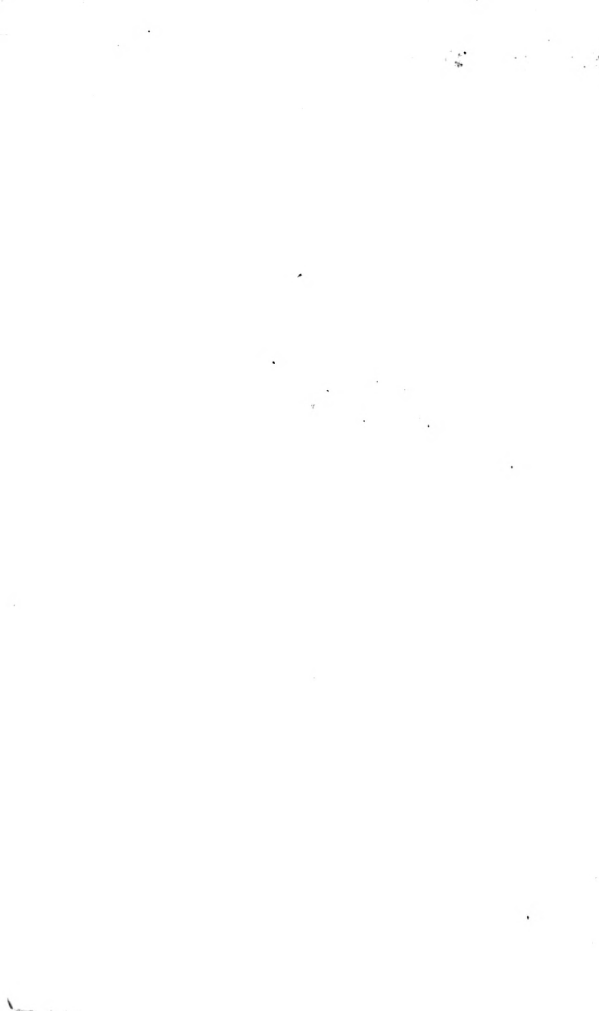


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THE
BANKS OF WYE.

THE
POEMS
OF
ROBERT BLOOMFIELD.
IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. III.

BANKS OF WYE,
AND
MAY-DAY WITH THE MUSES.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND
GREEN; BALDWIN, CRADOCK, AND JOY; HARVEY
AND DARTON; J. BOOKER; G. COWIE AND CO.;
AND HAMILTON AND ADAMS.

1827.

London : Printed by Thomas Davison, Whitefriars.

P R E F A C E.

IN the summer of 1807, a party of my good friends in Gloucestershire proposed to themselves a short excursion down the Wye, and through part of South Wales.

While this plan was in agitation, the lines which I had composed on "Shooter's Hill," during ill health, and inserted in my last volume, obtained their particular attention. A spirit of prediction, as well as sorrow, is there indulged; and it was now in the power of this happy party to falsify such predictions, and to render a pleasure to the writer of no common kind. An invitation to accompany them was the consequence; and the following Journal is the result of that invitation.

Should the reader, from being a resident or frequent visitor, be well acquainted with the route, and able to discover inaccuracies in distances, succession of objects, or local particulars, he is requested to recollect that the party was out but ten days—a period much too

Preface.

short for correct and laborious description, but quite sufficient for all the powers of poetry which I feel capable of exerting. The whole exhibits the language and feelings of a man who had never before seen a mountainous country ; and of this it is highly necessary that the reader should be apprised.

A Swiss, or perhaps a Scottish Highlander, may smile at supposed or real exaggerations ; but they will be excellent critics when they call to mind that they themselves judge in these cases, as I do, by comparison.

Perhaps it may be said, that because much of public approbation has fallen to my lot, it was unwise to venture again. I confess that the journey left such powerful, such unconquerable impressions on my mind, that embodying my thoughts in rhyme became a matter almost of necessity. To the parties concerned I know it will be an acceptable little volume : to whom, and to the public, it is submitted with due respect.

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD.

City Road, London,

June 30, 1811.

TO
THOMAS JOHN LLOYD BAKER, ESQ.
OF STOUT'S HILL, ULEY,
AND HIS EXCELLENT LADY;
AND
ROBERT BRANSBY COOPER, ESQ.
OF FERNEY HILL, DURSLEY,
IN THE COUNTY OF GLOUCESTER,
AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY;
THIS JOURNAL
IS DEDICATED,
WITH SENTIMENTS OF HIGH ESTEEM,
AND A LIVELY RECOLLECTION OF PAST PLEASURES,
BY THEIR HUMBLE SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.



THE
BANKS OF WYE.

BOOK I.

The Vale of Uley—Forest of Dean—Ross—Wilton Castle—
Goodrich Castle—Courtfield, Welsh Bicknor, Coldwell—
Gleaner's Song—Coldwell Rocks—Symmon's Yat—Great
Doward—New Wier—Martin's Well—The Coracle—Arrival
at Monmouth.

“ ROUSE from thy slumber, Pleasure calls, arise,
Quit thy half-rural bower, a while despise
The thralldom that consumes thee. We who dwell
Far from thy land of smoke advise thee well.
Here Nature's bounteous hand around shall fling
Scenes that thy Muse hath never dared to sing.

Invitation.

When sickness weigh'd thee down, and strength declined ;

When dread eternity absorb'd thy mind,

Flow'd the predicting verse, by gloom o'erspread,

That ' Cambrian mountains ' thou shouldst never tread,

That ' time-worn cliff and classic stream to see,'

Was wealth's prerogative, despair for thee.

Come to the proof ; with us the breeze inhale,

Renounce despair, and come to Severn's vale ;

And where the COTSWOLD HILLS are stretch'd along,

Seek our green dell, as yet unknown to song :

Start hence with us, and trace, with raptured eye,

The wild meanderings of the beauteous WYE ;

Thy ten days leisure ten days joy shall prove,

And rock and stream breathe amity and love."

Such was the call ; with instant ardour hail'd,

The siren Pleasure caroll'd and prevail'd ;

Uley Bury.

Soon the deep dell appear'd, and the clear brow
Of ULEY BURY * smiled o'er all below,
O'er mansion, flock, and circling woods that hung
Round the sweet pastures where the sky-lark sung.
O for the fancy, vigorous and sublime,
Chaste as the theme, to triumph over time !
Bright as the rising day, and firm as truth,
To speak new transports to the lowland youth,
That bosoms still might throb, and still adore,
When his who strives to charm them beats no more !

* Bury, or Burg, the Saxon name for a hill, particularly for one wholly or partially formed by art. *Uley Bury*, from the singular valley below, embosoming *Uley* and *Oulpen*, is an eminence of singular beauty, crowned by intrenchments; though in itself but a kind of termination of the Cotswold Hills, in which character *Stinchcombe* takes the lead; and both command a vast prospect over the Severn and the mountains of South Wales.

Forest of Dean.

ONE August morn, with spirits high,
Sound health, bright hopes, and cloudless sky,
A cheerful group their farewell bade
To DURSLEY tower, to ULEY's shade ;
And where bold STINCHCOMBE's greenwood side
Heaves in the van of highland pride,
Scour'd the broad vale of Severn ; where
The foes of verse shall never dare
Genius to scorn, or bound its power,
There blood-stain'd BERKELEY's turrets low'r,
A name that cannot pass away,
Till time forgets " the Bard " of GRAY.

Quitting fair Glo'ster's northern road,
To gain the pass of FRAMILODE,
Before us DEAN's black forest spread,
And MAY HILL, with his tufted head,
Beyond the ebbing tide appear'd ;
And Cambria's distant mountains rear'd

Forest of Dean.

Their dark blue summits far away ;
And SEVERN, 'midst the burning day,
Curved his bright line, and bore along
The mingled *Avon*, pride of song.

The trembling steeds soon ferried o'er,
Neigh'd loud upon the forest shore ;
Domains that once, at early morn,
Rang to the hunter's bugle horn,
When barons proud would bound away ;
And even kings would hail the day,
When crested chiefs their bright-arm'd train
Of javelin'd horsemen roused amain,
And chasing wide the wolf or boar,
Bade the deep woodland valleys roar.
But *we* no dang'rous chase pursued ;
Sound wheels and hoofs their tasks renew'd ;
Behind roll'd SEVERN, gleaming far,
Around us roar'd no sylvan war,

Ross.

'Mid depths of shade, gay sunbeams broke
Through noble FLAXLEY'S bow'rs of oak ;
And many a cottage, trim and gay,
Whisper'd delight through all the way ;
On hills exposed, in dells unseen,
To patriarchal MITCHEL DEAN.
Rose-cheek'd *Pomona* here was queen,
Though *Ceres* edged *her* fields between,
And on each hill-top, mounted high,
Her sickle waved in ecstacy ;
Till, Ross, thy charms all hearts confess'd,
Thy peaceful walks, thy hours of rest
And contemplation. Here the mind,
(Its usual luggage left behind,)
Feels all its dormant fires revive,
And sees " the *Man of Ross* " alive ;
And hears the Twick'nham Bard again
To KYRLE'S high virtues lift his strain ;

Excursion on the Wye.

Whose own hand clothed this far-famed hill
With rev'rend elms, that shade us still ;
Whose mem'ry shall survive the day
When elms and empires feel decay.

KYRLE die, by BARD ennobled ? Never :

The Man of Ross shall live for ever ;

And long that spire shall time defy,

To grace the flow'ry-margin'd WYE,

Scene of the morrow's joy, that prest

Its unseen beauties on our rest

In dreams ; but who of dreams would tell,

Where truth sustains the song so well * ?

The morrow came, and Beauty's eye

Ne'er beam'd upon a lovelier sky ;

Imagination instant brought,

And dash'd, amidst the train of thought,

* The carriages were sent forward to meet the party at Chepstow.

Excursion on the Wye.

Tints of the bow. The boatman stript ;
Glee at the helm exulting tript,
And waved her flower-encircled wand,
“ Away, away, to Fairy Land.”
Light dipt the oars ; but who can name
The various objects dear to fame,
That changing, doubling, wild, and strong,
Demand the noblest powers of song ?
Then, O forgive the vagrant Muse,
Ye who the sweets of Nature choose ;
And thou, whom destiny hath tied
To this romantic river’s side,
Down gazing from each close retreat,
On boats that glide beneath thy feet,
Forgive the stranger’s meagre line,
That seems to slight that spot of thine ;
For he, alas ! could only glean
The changeful outlines of the scene ;

Wilton Castle.

A momentary bliss ; and here
Links memory's power with rapture's tear.

Who curb'd the barons' kingly power* ?
Let hist'ry tell that fateful hour
At home, when surly winds shall roar,
And prudence shut the study door.
DE WILTONS here, of mighty name,
The whelming flood, the summer stream,
Mark'd from their towers.—The fabric falls,
The rubbish of their splendid halls

* Henry the Seventh gave an irrevocable blow to the dangerous privileges assumed by the barons, in abolishing liveries and retainers, by which every malefactor could shelter himself from the law, on assuming a nobleman's livery, and attending his person. And as a finishing stroke to the feudal tenures, an act was passed, by which the barons and gentlemen of landed interest were at liberty to sell and mortgage their lands, without fines or licences for the alienation.

Pencraig Wood.

Time in his march hath scatter'd wide,
And blank oblivion strives to hide*.

A while the grazing herd was seen,
And trembling willow's silver green,
Till the fantastic current stood
In line direct for PENCRAIG WOOD;
Whose bold green summit welcome bade,
Then rear'd behind his nodding shade.
Here, as the light boat skimm'd along,
The clarionet, and chosen song,
(That mellow, wild, Æolian lay,
"Sweet in the Woodlands,") roll'd away
Their echoes down the stream, that bore
Each dying close to every shore,
And forward cape, and woody range,
That form the never-ceasing change,

* The ruins of Wilton Castle stand on the opposite side of the river, nearly fronting the town of Ross.

Goodrich Castle.

To him who floating, void of care,
Twirls with the stream, he knows not where.
Till bold, impressive, and sublime,
Gleam'd all that 's left by storms and time
Of GOODRICH TOWERS. The mould'ring pile
Tells noble truths,—but dies the while.
O'er the steep path, through brake and brier,
His batter'd turrets still aspire,
In rude magnificence. 'Twas here
LANCASTRIAN HENRY spread his cheer,
When came the news that HAL was born,
And MONMOUTH hail'd th' auspicious morn :
A boy in sports, a prince in war,
Wisdom and valour crown'd his car ;
Of France the terror, England's glory,
As Stratford's bard has told the story.

No butler's proxies snore supine,
Where the old monarch kept his wine ;

Goodrich Castle.

No Welsh ox roasting, horns and all,
Adorns his throng'd and laughing hall ;
But where he pray'd, and told his beads,
A thriving ash luxuriant spreads.

No wheels by piecemeal brought the pile ;
No barks embowell'd Portland Isle ;
Dig, cried experience, dig away,
Bring the firm quarry into day ;
The excavation still shall save
Those ramparts which its entrails gave.
“ Here KINGS shall dwell,” the builders cried,
“ Here England's foes shall lower their pride ;
“ Hither shall suppliant nobles come,
“ And THIS be England's *royal* home.”
Vain hope ! for on the Gwentian shore
The regal banner streams no more !
Nettles, and vilest weeds that grow,
To mock poor grandeur's head laid low,

Courtfield.

Creep round the turrets valour raised,
And flaunt where youth and beauty gazed.

Here fain would strangers loiter long,
And muse as Fancy's woof grows strong ;
Yet cold the heart that could complain,
Where POLLETT * struck his oars again ;
For lovely as the sleeping child,
The stream glides on sublimely wild,
In perfect beauty, perfect ease.

—The awning trembled in the breeze,
And scarcely trembled, as we stood
For RUERDEAN Spire and BISHOP'S WOOD.
The fair domains of COURTFIELD † made
A paradise of mingled shade

* The boatman.

† A seat belonging to the family of Vaughan, which is not unnoticed in the pages of history. According to tradition, it is the place where Henry the Fifth was nursed, under the care of the Countess of Salisbury, from which circumstance the

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~~~~~  
Coldwell Spring.  
~~~~~

Round BICKNOR's tiny church, that cowers
Beneath his host of woodland bowers.

But who the charm of words shall fling
O'er RAVEN CLIFF, and COLDWELL Spring,
To brighten the unconscious eye,
And wake the soul to ecstasy?

Noon scorch'd the fields; the boat lay to;
The dripping oars had nought to do,
Where round us rose a scene that might
Enchant an idiot—glorious sight!
Here, in one gay according mind,
Upon the sparkling stream we dined;
As shepherds free on mountain heath,
Free as the fish that watch'd beneath

original name of Grayfield is said to have been changed to Courtfield*.

* This is probably an erroneous tradition; for *Court* was a common name for a manor-house, where the lord of the manor held his court.—*Core's Monmouth*.

Gleaners.

For falling crums, where cooling lay
The wine that cheer'd us on our way.
Th' unruffled bosom of the stream
Gave every tint and every gleam ;
Gave shadowy rocks, and clear blue sky,
And double clouds of various dye ;
Gave dark green woods, or russet brown,
And pendent corn-fields, upside down.

A troop of gleaners changed their shade,
And 'twas a change by music made ;
For slowly to the brink they drew,
To mark our joy, and share it too.
How oft, in childhood's flow'ry days,
I 've heard the wild impassion'd lays
Of such a group, lays strange and new,
And thought, was ever song so true !
When from the hazel's cool retreat
They watch'd the summer's trembling heat ;

16 THE BANKS OF WYE.

Gleaner's Song.

And through the boughs rude urchins play'd,
Where matrons, round the laughing maid,
Prest the long grass beneath ! And here
Perhaps they shared an equal cheer ;
Enjoy'd the feast with equal glee,
And raised the song of revelry :
Yet half abash'd, reserved, and shy,
Watch'd till the strangers glided by.

GLEANER'S SONG.

DEAR ELLEN, your tales are all plenteously stored
With the joys of some bride, and the wealth of her
lord :

Of her chariots and dresses,
And worldly caresses,

Gleaner's Song.

And servants that fly when she 's waited upon :
But what can she boast if she weds unbeloved ?
Can she e'er feel the joy that one morning I proved,
When I put on my new-gown and waited for John ?

'These fields, my dear Ellen, I knew them of yore,
Yet to me they ne'er look'd so enchanting before ;

The distant bells ringing,

The birds round us singing,

For pleasure is pure when affection is won :
They told me the troubles and cares of a wife ;
But I loved him ; and that was the pride of my life,
When I put on my new-gown and waited for John.

He shouted and ran, as he leapt from the stile ;
And what in my bosom was passing the while ?

For love knows the blessing

Of ardent caressing,

18 THE BANKS OF WYE.

Mr. Warre's Monument.

When virtue inspires us, and doubts are all gone,
The sunshine of Fortune you say is divine ;
True love and the sunshine of Nature were mine,
When I put on my new-gown and waited for John.

Never could spot be suited less
To bear memorials of distress ;
None, cries the sage, more fit is found,
They strike at once a double wound ;
Humiliation bids you sigh,
And think of poor mortality.

Close on the bank, and half o'ergrown,
Beneath a dark wood's sombrous frown,
A monumental stone appears
Of one who, in his blooming years,
While bathing spurn'd the grassy shore,
And sunk, 'midst friends, to rise no more.

Mr. Warre's Monument.

By parents witness'd.—Hark ! their shrieks !
 The dreadful language horror speaks !
 But why in verse attempt to tell
 That tale the stone records so well * ?

** Inscription on the side towards the water.*

“ Sacred to the memory of JOHN WHITEHEAD WARRE, who perished near this spot, whilst bathing in the river Wye, in sight of his afflicted parents, brother, and sisters, on the 14th of September, 1804, in the sixteenth year of his age.

“ GOD’S WILL BE DONE,

Who, in his mercy, hath granted consolation to the parents of the dear departed, in the reflection that he possessed truth, innocence, filial piety, and fraternal affection, in the highest degree. That, but a few moments before he was called to a better life, he had (with a never to be forgotten piety) joined his family in joyful thanks to his Maker, for the restoration of his mother’s health. His parents, in justice to his amiable virtue and excellent disposition, declare, that he was void of offence towards them. With humbled hearts they bow to the Almighty’s dispensation; trusting, through the mediation of

Mr. Warre's Monument.

Nothing could damp th' awaken'd joy,
Not e'en thy fate, ingenuous boy ;
The great, the grand of Nature strove,
To lift our hearts to life and love.

his blessed Son, he will mercifully receive their child he so suddenly took to himself.

“ This monument is here erected to warn parents and others how they trust the deceitful stream ; and particularly to exhort them to learn and observe the directions of the Humane Society, for the recovery of persons apparently drowned. Alas ! it is with the extremest sorrow here commemorated, what anguish is felt from a want of this knowledge. The lamented youth swam very well ; was endowed with great bodily strength and activity ; and possibly, had proper application been used, might have been saved from his untimely fate. He was born at Oporto, in the kingdom of Portugal, on the 14th of February, 1789 ; third son of James Warre, of London, and of the county of Somerset, merchant, and Elinor, daughter of Thomas Gregg, of Belfast, Esq.

“ Passenger, whoever thou art, spare this tomb ! It is erected for the benefit of the surviving, being but a poor record of the grief of those who witnessed the sad occasion of it. God pre-

Coldwell Rocks.

HAIL ! COLDWELL ROCKS ; frown, frown away ;
Thrust from your woods your shafts of grey :
Fall not, to crush our mortal pride,
Or stop the stream on which we glide.
Our lives are short, our joys are few :
But, giants, what is time to you ?
Ye who erect, in many a mass,
Rise from the scarcely dimpled glass,
That with distinct and mellow glow
Reflects your monstrous forms below ;

serve you and yours from such calamity ! May you not require their assistance ; but if you should, the apparatus, with directions for the application by the Humane Society, for the saving of persons apparently drowned, are lodged at the church of Coldwell."

On the opposite side is inscribed,

" It is with gratitude acknowledged by the parents of the deceased, that permission was gratuitously, and most obligingly, granted for the erection of this monument, by William Vaughan, Esq. of Courtfield."

Coldwell Rocks.

Or in clear shoals, in breeze or sun,
Shakes all your shadows into one ;
Boast ye o'er man in proud disdain,
A silent, everlasting reign ?
Bear ye your heads so high in scorn
Of *names* that puny man hath borne ?

Proud rocks ! had Cambria's bards but here
Their names engraven, deep and clear,
That such as gaily wind along
Might greet with shouts those sires of song,
And trace the fame that mortals crave
To LIGHT and LIFE beyond the grave !
Then might ye boast your *wreaths* entwined
With trophies of the deathless MIND ;
Then would your fronts record on high,
“ *We* perish !—MAN can never die !”

Not nameless quite ye lift your brows,
For each the navigator knows ;

Coldwell Rocks.

Not by King Arthur, or his knights,
Bard famed in lays, or chief in fights ;
But former tourists, just as free,
(Though surely not so blest as we,)
A group of wranglers from the bar,
Suspending *here* their *mimic* war—
Mark'd towering BEARCROFT'S ivy crown,
And grey VANSITTART'S waving gown :
And who 's that giant by his side ?
“ SERGEANT ADAIR,” the boatman cried.
Yet strange it seems, however true,
That *here*, where law has nought to do,
Where rules and bonds are set aside,
By wood, by rock, by stream defied ;
That *here*, where nature seems at strife
With all that tells of busy life,
Man should by *names* be carried still
To Babylon against his will.

Coldwell Rocks.

But how shall memory rehearse,
Or dictate the untoward verse
That truth demands ? Could he refuse
Thy unsought honours, darling Muse,
Who *thus*, in idle, happy trim
Rode just where friends would carry him,
And *thus* hath since his cares beguiled
By rhymes as joyous, and as wild ?
Truth he obeys. The generous band,
That spread his board and grasp'd his hand,
In native mirth, as here they came,
Gave a bluff rock *his* humble name :
A yew-tree clasps its rugged base ;
The boatman knows its reverend face ;
With POLLETT'S *memory* and his *fee*,
Rests the result that time shall see.
Yet, whether time shall sweep away
The fragile whimsies of a day ;

Coldwell Rocks.

Or future travellers rest the oar,
To hear the mingled echoes roar
A stranger's triumph ! *He* will feel
A joy that death alone can steal.
And should he cold indifference feign,
And treat such honours with disdain,
Pretending pride shall not deceive him,
Good people all, pray don't believe him ;
In such a spot to leave a name,
At least is no opprobrious fame ;
This rock perhaps uprear'd his brow,
Ere human blood began to flow.

Nor let the wandering stranger fear
That WYE here ends her wild career ;
Though closing boughs,—though hills may seem
To bar all egress to the stream,
Some airy height he climbs amain,
And finds the silver eel again.

Symmon's Yat.

No fears we form'd, no labours counted,
Yet SYMMON'S YAT must be surmounted ;
A tower of rock, that seems to cry,
" Go round about me, neighbour WYE *."
On went the boat, and up the steep
Her straggling crew began to creep,
To gain the ridge, enjoy the view,
Where the fresh gales of summer blew.
'The gleaming WYE, that circles round
Her four-mile course, again is found ;

* This rocky isthmus, perforated at the base, would measure not more than six hundred yards, and its highest point is two thousand feet above the water. If this statement, taken from Coxe's History of Monmouthshire, and an Excursion down the Wye, by C. Heath, of Monmouth, is correct, its elevation is greater than that of the " Pen y Vale," or " Sugar-Loaf Mountain," near Abergavenny. Yet it has less the appearance of a mountain than the river has that of an excavation. It is probable that some error has crept into the publications above named.

Great Doward.

And, crouching to the conqueror's pride,
Bathes his huge cliffs on either side ;
Seen at one glance, when from his brow
The eye surveys twin gulfs below.

Whence comes thy name ? What *Symon* he,
Who gain'd a monument in thee ?
Perhaps a wild-wood hunter,—born
Peril, and toil, and death to scorn ;
Or warrior, with his powerful lance,
Who scaled the cliff to mark th' advance
Of rival arms ; or humble swain,
Who sought for pasture here in vain ;
Or venerable bard, who strove
To tune his harp to themes of love ;
Or with a poet's ardent flame
Sung to the winds his country's fame ?

Westward GREAT DOWARD, stretching wide,
Upheaves his iron-bowell'd side ;

New Wier.

And by his everlasting mound
Prescribes th' imprison'd river's bound,
And strikes the eye with mountain force :
But, stranger, mark thy rugged course
From crag to crag, unwilling, slow,
To NEW WIER forge, that smokes below.
Here rush'd the keel like lightning by :
The helmsman watch'd with anxious eye ;
And oars alternate touch'd the brim,
To keep the flying boat in trim.

Forward quick changing, changing still,
Again rose cliff, and wood, and hill,
Where mingling foliage seem'd to strive
With dark-brown saplings, flay'd alive *,
Down to the gulf beneath ; where oft
The toiling wood-boy dragg'd aloft

* The eustom is here alluded to of stripping the bark from oaks while growing, which gives an almost undescribable, though not the most agreeable, effect to the landscape.

Little Doward—Martin's Well.

His stubborn faggot from the brim,
And gazed, and tugg'd with sturdy limb ;
And where the mind repose would seek,
A barren, storm-defying peak,
The Little DOWARD, lifted high
His rocky crown of royalty.

Hush ! not a whisper ! Oars, be still !
Comes that soft sound from yonder hill ?
Or is the sound so faint, though near
It scarcely strikes the list'ning ear ?
E'en so ; for down the green bank fell
An ice-cold stream from MARTIN'S WELL,
Bright as young beauty's azure eye,
And pure as infant chastity ;
Each limpid draught suffused with dew
The dipping glass's crystal hue ;
And as it trembling reach'd the lip,
Delight sprung up at every sip.

Martin's Well.

Pure, temperate joys, and calm, were these ·
We toss'd upon no Indian seas ;
No savage chiefs, with tawny crew,
Came jabbering in the bark canoe
Our strength to dare, our course to turn ;
Yet boats a South Sea chief would burn *
Sulk'd in the alder shade. Each bore,
Devoid of keel, or sail, or oar,
An upright fisherman, with eye
Of Bramin-like solemnity ;
Who scann'd the surface either way,
And cleaved it like a fly at play ;
And crossways bore a balanced pole,
'To drive the salmon from his hole ;

* In Cæsar's Commentaries, mention is made of boats of this description, formed of a raw hide, (from whence, perhaps, their name Coracle) which were in use among the natives. How little they dreamed of the vastness of modern perfection, and of the naval conflicts of latter days!

Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Then heedful leap'd, without parade,
On shore, as luck or fancy bade ;
And o'er his back, in gallant trim,
Swung the light shell that carried him ;
Then down again his burden threw,
And launch'd his whirling bowl anew ;
Displaying, in his bow'ry station,
The infancy of navigation.

Soon round us spread the hills and dales
Where GEOFFREY spun his magic tales,
And call'd them history. The land
Whence ARTHUR sprung, and all his band
Of gallant knights. Sire of romance,
Who led the fancy's mazy dance,
Thy tales shall please, thy name still be,
When Time forgets my verse and me.

Low sunk the sun, his ev'ning beam
Scarce reach'd us on the tranquil stream :

Arrival at Monmouth.

Shut from the world, and all its din,
Nature's own bonds had closed us in ;
Wood, and deep dell, and rock, and ridge,
From smiling Ross to MONMOUTH BRIDGE ;
From morn, till twilight stole away,
A long, unclouded, glorious day.

THE
BANKS OF WYE.

BOOK II.

Henry the Fifth—Morning on the Water—Landoga—Ballad,
“ The Maid of Landoga ”—Tintern Abbey—Wind-Cliff—
Arrival at Chepstow—Persfield—Ballad, “ Morris of Pers-
field ”—View from Wind-Cliff—Chepstow Castle by Moon-
light.

HARRY of MONMOUTH, o'er thy page,
Great chieftain of a daring age !
The stripling soldier burns to see
The spot of thy nativity ;
His ardent fancy can restore
Thy castle's turrets, (now no more) ;

Morning.

See the tall plumes of victory wave,
And call old valour from the grave ;
'Twang the strong bow, and point the lance,
That pierced the shatter'd hosts of France,
When nations, in the days of yore,
Shook at the rampant lion's roar.

TEN hours were all we could command ;
The boat was moor'd upon the strand ;
The midnight current, by her side,
Was stealing down to meet the tide ;
The wakeful steersman ready lay,
To rouse us at the break of day :
It came—how soon ! and what a sky,
To cheer the bounding traveller's eye !
To make him spurn his couch of rest,
To shout upon the river's breast,

Morning.

Watching by turns the rosy hue
Of early cloud, or sparkling dew.
These living joys the verse shall tell :
HARRY, and MONMOUTH, fare-ye-well.

On upland farm, and airy height,
Swept by the breeze, and clothed in light,
The reapers, early from their beds,
Perhaps were singing o'er our heads.
For, stranger, deem not that the eye
Could hence survey the eastern sky ;
Or mark the streak'd horizon's bound,
Where first the rosy sun wheels round.
Deep in the gulf beneath were we,
Whence climb'd blue mists o'er rock and tree ;
A mingling, undulating crowd,
That form'd the dense or fleecy cloud ;
Slow from the darken'd stream upborne,
They caught the quickening gales of morn ;

Kymin Pavilion.

There bade their parent WYE good day,
And, tinged with purple, sail'd away.

The MUNNO * join'd us all unseen.

TROY HOUSE, and BEAUFORT'S bowers of green,
And nameless prospects, half defined,
Involved in mist, were left behind.

Yet as the boat still onward bore,
The ramparts of the eastern shore
Cower'd the high crest to many a sweep,
And bade us o'er each minor steep
Mark the bold KYMIN'S sunny brow,
That, gleaming o'er our fogs below,
Lifted amain, with giant power,
E'en to the clouds his NAVAL TOWER †;

* The river Munno, or Mynnow, falls into the Wye, near Monmouth.

† The Kymin Pavilion, erected in honour of the British admirals, and their unparalleled victories.

Landoga.

Proclaiming to the morning sky
Valour, and fame, and victory.

THE air resign'd its hazy blue,
Just as LANDOGA came in view.
Delightful village ! one by one,
Thy climbing dwellings caught the sun.
So bright the scene, the air so clear,
Young Love and Joy seem'd station'd here ;
And each with floating banners cried,
“ Stop, friends, you 'll meet the rushing tide.”

Rude fragments, torn, disjointed, wild,
High on the Glo'ster shore are piled.
No mouldering fane, the boast of years,
Unstain'd by time, the wreck appears :
With pouring wrath, and hideous swell,
Down foaming from a-woodland dell,

Landoga.

A summer flood's resistless pow'r
Raised the grim ruin in an hour !
When that o'erwhelming tempest spread
Its terrors round the guilty head,
When earth-bound rocks themselves gave way,
When crash'd the prostrate timbers lay,
O, it had been a noble sight,
Crouching beyond the torrent's might,
To mark th' uprooted victims bow,
The grinding masses dash below,
And hear the long deep peal the while
Burst over TINTERN's roofless pile !
Then, as the sun regain'd his power,
When the last breeze from hawthorn bower,
Or Druid oak, had shook away
The rain-drops 'midst the gleaming day,
Perhaps the sigh of hope return'd,
And love in some chaste bosom burn'd,

The Maid of Landoga.

And softly trill'd, the stream along,
Some rustic maiden's village song.

THE MAID OF LANDOGA.

RETURN, my Llewellyn ! the glory

That heroes may gain o'er the sea,

Though nations may feel

Their invincible steel,

By falsehood is tarnish'd in story ;

Why tarry, Llewellyn, from me ?

Thy sails, on the fathomless ocean,

Are swell'd by the boisterous gale :

How rests thy tired head

On the rude rocking bed ?

While here not a leaf is in motion,

And melody reigns in the dale.

The Maid of Landoga.

The mountains of Monmouth invite thee ;

The WYE, O how beautiful here !

 This woodbine, thine own,

 Hath the cottage o'ergrown.

O what foreign shore can delight thee,

And where is the current so clear ?

Can lands, where false pleasure assails thee,

And beauty invites thee to roam ;

 Can the deep orange grove

 Charm with shadows of love ?

Thy love at LANDOGA bewails thee ;

Remember her truth and thy home.

ADIEU, LANDOGA, scene most dear.

Farewell we bade to ETHELL'S WIER ;

Round many a point then bore away,

Till morn was changed to beauteous day :

Tintern Abbey.

And forward on the lowland shore,
 Silent, majestic ruins, wore
 The stamp of holiness ; this strand
 The steersman hail'd, and touch'd the land.

SUDDEN the change ; at once to tread
 The grass-grown mansions of the dead !
 Awful to feeling, where, immense,
 Rose ruin'd, gray magnificence ;
 The fair-wrought shaft all ivy-bound,
 The towering arch with foliage crown'd,
 That trembles on its brow sublime,
 Triumphant o'er the spoils of time.
 Here, grasping all the eye beheld,
 Thought into mingling anguish swell'd,
 And check'd the wild excursive wing,
 O'er dust or bones of priest or king ;

Tintern Abbey.

Or raised some BLOOD-STAIN'D * warrior's ghost
To shout before his banner'd host.
But all was still.—The chequer'd floor
Shall echo to the step no more ;
Nor airy roof the strain prolong
Of vesper chant or choral song.

TINTERN, thy name shall hence sustain
A thousand raptures in my brain ;
Joys, full of soul, all strength, all eye,
That cannot fade, that cannot die.

No loitering here, lone walks to steal ;
Ours was the early hunter's meal ;

* There is shown here a mutilated figure, which they call the famous Earl Strongbow ; but it appears from Coxé that he was buried at Gloucester.

Tintern Abbey.

For time and tide, stern couple, ran
Their endless race, and laugh'd at man ;
Deaf, had we shouted, " turn about,"
Or, " wait awhile, till we come out :"
To humour them we check'd our pride,
And ten cheer'd hearts stow'd side by side,
Push'd from the shore with current strong,
And " Hey for Chepstow," steer'd along.

AMIDST the bright expanding day,
The solemn, deep, dark shadows lay
Of that rich foliage, tow'ring o'er
Where princely abbots dwelt of yore.
The mind, with instantaneous glance,
Beholds his barge of state advance.
Borne proudly down the ebbing tide,
She sweeps the waving boughs aside ;

Wind-Cliff.

She winds with flowing pendants drest ;
And as the current turns south-west,
She strikes her oars, where, full in view,
Stupendous WIND-CLIFF greets her crew.
But, Fancy, let thy day-dreams cease ;
With fallen greatness be at peace.
Enough ; for WIND-CLIFF still was found
To hail us as we doubled round.

Bold in primeval strength he stood ;
His rocky brow, all shagg'd with wood,
O'erlook'd his base, where, doubling strong,
The inward torrent pours along ;
Then ebbing turns, and turns again,
(To meet the Severn and the Main)
Beneath the dark shade sweeping round
Of beetling PERSFIELD'S fairy ground,

Chepstow Bridge.

By buttresses of rock upborne,
The rude APOSTLES all unshorn*.
Long be the slaught'ring axe defied :
Long may they bear their waving pride ;
Tree over tree, bower over bower,
In uncurb'd nature's wildest power ;
Till WYE forgets to wind below,
And genial spring to bid them grow.

AND shall we e'er forget the day,
When our last chorus died away ?
When first we hail'd, then moor'd beside
Rock-founded CHEPSTOW's mouldering pride ?
Where that strange bridge †, light, trembling, high,
Strides like a spider o'er the WYE ;

* Twelve projecting rocks so named, fringed with foliage nearly to the water's edge.

† “ On my arrival at Chepstow,” says Mr. Coxo, “ I walked

Chepstow Bridge.

When, for the joys the morn had giv'n,
Our thankful hearts were raised to Heav'n?
Never :—that moment shall be dear,
While hills can charm, or sun-beams cheer.

POLLETT, farewell! Thy dashing oar
Shall lull us into peace no more ;
But where KYRLE trimm'd his infant green,
Long mayst thou with thy bark be seen ;
And happy be the hearts that glide
Through such a scene, with such a guide.

to the bridge; it was low water, and I looked down on the river ebbing between forty and fifty feet beneath: six hours after, it rose near forty feet, almost reached the floor of the bridge, and flowed upward with great rapidity. The channel in this place being narrow in proportion to the Severn, and confined between perpendicular cliffs, the great rise and fall of the river are peculiarly manifest."

Persfield.

THE verse of gravel walks that tells,
With pebble-rocks and mole-hill swells,
May strain description's bursting cheeks,
And far outrun the goal it seeks.
Not so when ev'ning's purpling hours
Hied us away to PERSFIELD'S bowers :
Here no such danger waits the lay ;
Sing on, and truth shall lead the way.
Here sight may range, and hearts may glow,
Yet shrink from the abyss below ;
Here echoing precipices roar,
As youthful ardour shouts before ;
Here a sweet paradise shall rise
At once to greet poetic eyes.
Then why does *HE* dispel, unkind,
The sweet illusion from the mind,
YON GIANT*, with the goggling eye,
Who strides in *mock sublimity*?

* An immense giant of stone, who, to say the best of him,

The Giant.

Giants identified may frown ;
Nature and taste would knock them down :
Blocks that usurp some noble station,
As if to curb imagination,
Which, smiling at the chisel's power,
Makes better monsters every hour.

Beneath impenetrable green,
Down, 'midst the hazel stems, was seen
The turbid stream, with all that past ;
The lime-white deck, the gliding mast ;
Or skiff with gazers darting by,
Who raised their hands in ecstacy.
Impending cliffs hung overhead ;
The rock-path sounded to the tread,
Where twisted roots, in many a fold,
Through moss, disputed room for hold.

occupies a place where such personages are least wanted, or wished.

Persfield.

THE stranger who thus steals one hour
To trace thy walks from bower to bower,
Thy noble cliffs, thy wildwood joys,
Nature's own work that never cloys,
Who, while reflection bids him roam,
Calls not this paradise his *home*,
Can ne'er, with dull uncouscious eye,
Leave them behind without a sigh.
Thy tale of truth then, Sorrow, tell,
Of him who bade *this home* farewell;
MORRIS of PERSFIELD.—Hark, the strains !
Hark ! 'tis some hoary bard complains !
The deeds, the worth, he knew so well,
The force of nature bids him tell.

Morris of Persfield.

MORRIS OF PERSFIELD.

Who was lord of yon beautiful seat ;
 Yon woods which are tow'ring so high ?
Who spread the rich board for the great,
 Yet listen'd to pity's soft sigh ?
Who gave with a spirit so free,
 And fed the distress'd at his door ?
Our MORRIS of PERSFIELD was he,
 Who dwelt in the hearts of the poor.

But who e'en of wealth shall make sure,
 Since wealth to misfortune has bow'd ?
Long cherish'd untainted and pure,
 The stream of his charity flow'd.
But all his resources gave way ;
 O what could his feelings control ?

Morris of Persfield.

What shall curb, in the prosperous day,
Th' excess of a generous soul ?

He bade an adieu to the town ;
O, can I forget the sad day ?
When I saw the poor widows kneel down,
To bless him, to weep, and to pray.
Though sorrow was mark'd in his eye,
This trial he manfully bore ;
Then pass'd o'er the bridge of the WYE,
To return to his PERSFIELD no more.

'Twas true that another might feel ;
That poverty still might be fed ;
Yet long we rung out the dumb peal,
For to us noble MORRIS was dead.
He had not lost sight of his home,
Yon domain that so lovely appears,

View from Wind-Cliff.

When he heard it, and sunk overcome ;
He felt it—and burst into tears.

The lessons of prudence have charms,
And slighted, may lead to distress ;
But the man whom benevolence warms
Is an angel who lives but to bless.
If ever man merited fame,
If ever man's failings went free,
Forgot at the sound of his name,
Our MORRIS of PERSFIELD was he *.

CLEFT from the summit, who shall say
When WIND-CLIFF's other half gave way ?

* The author is equally indebted to Mr. Coxe's County History for this anecdote, as for the greater part of the notes subjoined throughout the Journal.

The Severn—Cotswold Hills, &c.

Or *when* the sea-waves, roaring strong,
First drove the rock-bound tide along ?
To studious leisure be resign'd,
The task that leads the wilder'd mind,
From time's first birth throughout the range
Of nature's everlasting change.

Soon from his all-commanding brow,
Lay PERSFIELD'S rocks and woods below.

BACK over MONMOUTH who could trace
The WYE's fantastic mountain race ?
BEFORE us, sweeping far and wide,
Lay out-stretch'd SEVERN'S ocean tide,
Through whose blue mists, all upward blown,
Broke the faint lines of heights unknown ;
And still, (though clouds would interpose,)
The COTSWOLD promontories rose
In dark succession : STINCHCOMBE'S brow,
With BERKELEY-CASTLE crouch'd below ;

Chepstow Castle.

And stranger spires on either hand,
From THORNBURY, on the Glo'ster strand,
With black-brow'd woods, and yellow fields,
(The boundless wealth that summer yields,)
Detain'd the eye, that glanced again
O'er KINGROAD anchorage to the main.

Or was the bounded view preferr'd,
Far, far beneath, the spreading herd
Low'd, as the cow-boy stroll'd along,
And cheerly sung his last new song.
But cow-boy, herd, and tide, and spire
Sunk into gloom.—The tinge of fire,
As westward roll'd the setting day,
Fled like a golden dream away.
Then CHEPSTOW'S ruin'd fortress caught
The mind's collected store of thought;
A dark, majestic, jealous frown
Hung on his brow, and warn'd us down.

Chepstow Castle.

'Twas well ; for he has much to boast,
Much still that tells of glories lost,
Though rolling years have form'd the sod,
Where once the bright-helm'd warrior trod
From tower to tower, and gazed around,
While all beneath him slept profound.
E'en on the walls where paced the brave,
High o'er his crumbling turrets wave
The rampant seedlings.—Not a breath
Pass'd through their leaves ; when, still as death,
We stopp'd to watch the clouds—for night
Grew splendid with increasing light,
Till, as time loudly told the hour,
Gleam'd the broad front of MARTEN'S TOWER *,

* Henry Marten, whose signature appears upon the death-warrant of Charles the First, finished his days here in prison. Marten lived to the advanced age of seventy-eight, and died by a stroke of apoplexy, which seized him while he was at dinner, in the twentieth year of his confinement. He was buried in the

Chepstow Castle.

Bright silver'd by the moon.—Then rose
The wild notes sacred to repose ;
Then the lone owl awoke from rest,
Stretch'd his keen talons, plumed his crest,
And, from his high embattled station,
Hooted a trembling salutation.
Rocks caught the “ halloo” from his tongue,
And PERSFIELD back the echoes flung
Triumphant o'er th' illustrious dead,
Their history lost, their glories fled.

chancel of the parish church at Chepstow. Over his ashes was placed a stone with an inscription, which remained there until one of the succeeding vicars declaring his abhorrence that the monument of a rebel should stand so near the altar, removed the stone into the body of the church !

THE
BANKS OF WYE.

BOOK III.

Departure for Ragland—Ragland Castle—Abergavenny—Expedition up the “Pen-y-Vale,” or Sugar-Loaf Hill—Invocation to the Spirit of Burns—View from the Mountain—Castle of Abergavenny—Departure for Brecon—Pembroke of Crickhowel—Tre-Tower Castle—Jane Edwards.

PEACE to your white-wall'd cots, ye vales,
Untainted fly your summer gales :
Health, thou from cities lov'st to roam,
O make the Monmouth hills thy home !
Great spirits of her bards of yore,
While harvests triumph, torrents roar,

Ragland Castle.

Train her young shepherds, train them high
To sing of mountain liberty :
Give them the harp and modest maid ;
Give them the sacred village shade.
Long be Llandenny, and Llansoy,
Names that import a rural joy ;
Known to our fathers, when May-day
Brush'd a whole twelvemonth's care away.

Far diff'rent joys possess'd the mind,
When Chepstow fading sunk behind,
And, from a belt of woods full grown,
Arose immense thy turrets brown,
Majestic RAGLAND! Harvests wave
Where thund'ring hosts their watch-word gave,
When cavaliers, with downcast eye,
Struck the last flag of loyalty * :

* This castle, with a garrison commanded by the Marquis of

Ragland Castle.

Then, left by gallant WORC'STER'S band,
To devastation's cruel hand
The beauteous fabric bow'd, fled all
The splendid hours of festival.
No smoke ascends ; the busy hum
Is heard no more ; no rolling drum,
No high-toned clarion sounds alarms,
No banner wakes the pride of arms * ;

Worcester, was the last place of strength which held out for the unfortunate Charles the First.

* “ These magnificent ruins, including the citadel, occupy a tract of ground not less than one-third of a mile in circumference.

“ In addition to the injury the castle sustained from the parliamentary army, considerable dilapidations have been occasioned by the numerous tenants in the vicinity, who conveyed away the stone and other materials for the construction of farm-houses, barns, and other buildings. No less than twenty-three staircases were taken down by these devastators ; but the present Duke of Beaufort no sooner succeeded to his estate

Ragland Castle.

But ivy, creeping year by year,
Of growth enormous, triumphs here.
Each dark festoon with pride upheaves
Its glossy wilderness of leaves
On sturdy limbs, that, clasping, bow
Broad o'er the turrets' utmost brow,
Encompassing, by strength alone,
In fret-work bars, the sliding stone,
That tells how years and storms prevail,
And spreads its dust upon the gale.

The man who could unmoved survey
What ruin, piecemeal, sweeps away ;
Works of the pow'rful and the brave,
All sleeping in the silent grave ;

than he instantly gave orders that not a stone should be moved from its situation, and thus preserved these noble ruins from destruction." *History of Monmouthshire*, page 148.

Ragland Castle.

Unmoved reflect, that here were sung
Carols of joy, by beauty's tongue,
Is fit, where'er he deigns to roam,
And hardly fit—to stay at home.
Spent *here* in peace,—one solemn hour
('Midst legends of the YELLOW TOWER,
Truth and tradition's mingled stream,
Fear's start, and superstition's dream *)
Is pregnant with a thousand joys,
That distance, place, nor time destroys ;
That with exhaustless stores supply
Food for reflection till we die.

* A village woman, who very officiously pointed out all that she knew respecting the former state of the castle, desired us to remark the descent to a vault, apparently of large dimensions, in which she had heard that no candle would continue burning ; “ and,” added she, “ they say it is because of the damps ; but for my part, I think the devil is there.”

Abergavenny—Pen-y-Vale.

ONWARD the rested steeds pursued
The cheerful route, with strength renew'd,
For onward lay the gallant town,
Whose name old custom hath clipp'd down,
With more of music left than many,
So handily to ABERGANNY.

And as the sidelong, sober light
Left valleys darken'd, hills less bright,
Great BLORENGE rose to tell his tale ;
And the dun peak of PEN-Y-VALE
Stood like a sentinel, whose brow
Scowl'd on the sleeping world below ;
Yet even sleep itself outspread
The mountain paths we meant to tread,
'Midst fresh'ning gales all unconfined,
Where Usk's broad valley shrinks behind.

Joyous the crimson morning rose,
As joyous from the night's repose

Pen-y-Vale.

Sprung the light heart. The glancing eye
Beheld, amidst the dappled sky,
Exulting PEN-Y-VALE. But how
Could females climb his gleaming brow,
Rude toil encount'ring? how defy
The wint'ry torrent's course, when dry,
A rough-scoop'd bed of stones? or meet
The powerful force of August heat?
Wheels might assist, could wheels be found
Adapted to the rugged ground:
'Twas done; for prudence bade us start
With three Welsh ponies, and a cart;
A red-cheek'd mountaineer*, a wit,
Full of rough shafts, that sometimes hit,
Trudged by their side, and twirl'd his thong,
And cheer'd his scrambling team along.

* The driver, Powell, I believe, occupied a cottage, or small farm, which we passed during the ascent, and where goats' milk was offered for refreshment.

Pen-y-Vale.

At ease to mark a scene so fair,
And treat their steeds with mountain air,
Some rode apart, or led before,
Rock after rock the wheels upbore ;
The careful driver slowly sped,
To many a bough we duck'd the head,
And heard the wild inviting calls
Of summer's tinkling waterfalls,
In wooded glens below ; and still,
At every step the sister hill,
BLORENCE, grew greater ; half unseen
At times from out our bowers of green,
That telescopic landscapes made,
From the arch'd windows of its shade ;
For woodland tracts begirt us round ;
The vale beyond was fairy ground,
That verse can never paint. Above
Gleam'd, (something like the mount of Jove,

Pen-y-Vale.

But how much, let the learned say,
Who take Olympus in their way)
Glean'd the fair, sunny, cloudless peak
That simple strangers ever seek.
And are they simple? Hang the dunce
Who would not doff his cap at once
In ecstasy, when, bold and new,
Bursts on his sight a mountain-view.

Though vast the prospect here became,
Intensely as the love of fame
Glow'd the strong hope, that strange desire,
That deathless wish of climbing higher,
Where heather clothes his graceful sides,
Which many a scatter'd rock divides,
Bleach'd by more years than hist'ry knows,
Moved by no power but melting snows,
Or gushing springs, that wash away
Th' embedded earth that forms their stay.

Pen-y-Vale.

The heart distends, the whole frame feels,
Where, inaccessible to wheels,
The utmost storm-worn summit spreads
Its rocks grotesque, its downy beds ;
Here no false feeling, sense belies,
Man lifts the weary foot, and sighs ;
Laughter is dumb ; hilarity
Forsakes at once th' astonish'd eye ;
E'en the closed lip, half useless grown,
Drops but a word, " Look down ; look down."

Good Heav'ns ! must scenes like these expand,
Scenes so magnificently grand,
And millions breathe, and pass away,
Unbless'd throughout their little day,
With one short glimpse ? By place confined,
Shall many an anxious, ardent mind,

Invocation to Burns.

Sworn to the Muses, cower its pride,
Doom'd but to sing with pinions tied ?

SPIRIT of BURNS ! the daring child
Of glorious freedom, rough and wild,
How have I wept o'er all thy ills,
How blest thy Caledonian hills !
How almost worshipp'd in my dreams
Thy mountain haunts,—thy classic streams !
How burnt with hopeless, aimless fire,
To mark thy giant strength aspire
In patriot themes ! and tuned the while
Thy “ *Bonny Doon*” or “ *Balloch Mile.*”
Spirit of BURNS ! accept the tear
That rapture gives thy mem'ry here
On the bleak mountain top. Here thou
Thyself hadst raised the gallant brow

 Invocation to Burns.

Of conscious intellect, to twine
 Th' imperishable verse of thine,
 That charms the world. Or can it be,
 That scenes like these were nought to thee ?
 That Scottish hills so far excel,
 That so deep sinks the Scottish dell,
 That boasted PEN-Y-VALE had been *
 For thy loud northern lyre too mean ;
 Broad-shoulder'd BLORENCE a mere knoll,
 And SKYRID, let him smile or scowl,
 A dwarfish bully, vainly proud,
 Because he breaks the passing cloud ?

* The respective heights of these mountains above the mouth of the Gavany were taken barometrically by Gen. Roy.

| | Feet. |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| The summit of the Sugar-Loaf | 1852 |
| Of the Blorengé | 1720 |
| Of the Skyrid | 1498 |

View from Pen-y-Vale.

If even so, thou bard of fame,
The consequences rest the same :
For, grant that to thy infant sight
Rose mountains of stupendous height ;
Or grant that Cambrian minstrels taught
'Mid scenes that mock the lowland thought ;
Grant that old TALLIESEN flung
His thousand raptures, as he sung
From huge PLYNLIMON's awful brow,
Or CADER IDRIS, cap't with snow ;
Such Alpine scenes with them or thee
Well suited.—*These* are Alps to me.

LONG did we, noble BLORENCE, gaze
On thee, and mark the eddying haze
That strove to reach thy level crown,
From the rich stream, and smoking town ;

View from Pen-y-Vale.

And oft, old SKYRID, hail'd thy name,
Nor dared deride thy holy fame*.
Long follow'd with untiring eye
Th' illumined clouds, that o'er the sky
Drew their thin veil, and slowly sped,
Dipping to every mountain's head,
Dark mingling, fading, wild, and thence,
Till admiration, in suspense,
Hung on the verge of sight. Then sprung,
By thousands known, by thousands sung,
Feelings that earth and time defy,
That cleave to immortality.

* There still remains, on the summit of the Skyrid, or St. Michael's Mount, the foundation of an ancient chapel, to which the inhabitants formerly ascended on Michaelmas Eve, in a kind of pilgrimage. A prodigious cleft, or separation in the hill, tradition says, was caused by the earthquake at the crucifixion; it was therefore termed the Holy Mountain.

View from Pen y-Vale.

A light gray haze inclosed us round :
Some momentary drops were found,
Borne on the breeze ; soon all dispell'd ;
Once more the glorious prospect swell'd
Interminably fair *. Again
Stretch'd the BLACK MOUNTAIN'S dreary chain !
When eastward turn'd the straining eye,
Great MALVERN met the cloudless sky :
Dark in the south uprose the shores,
Where Ocean in his fury roars,
And rolls abrupt his fearful tides,
Far still from MENDIP'S fern-clad sides ;
From whose vast range of mingling blue
The weary, wand'ring sight withdrew,

* This hill commands a view of the counties of Radnor, Salop, Brecknock, Glamorgan, Hereford, Worcester, Gloucester, Somerset, and Wilts.

View from Pen-y-Vale.

O'er fair GLAMORGAN's woods and downs,
O'er glitt'ring streams, and farms, and towns,
Back to the TABLE ROCK, that lowers
O'er old CRICKHOWEL's ruin'd towers.

Here perfect stillness reign'd. The breath
A moment hush'd, 'twas mimic death.
The ear, from all assaults released,
As motion, sound, and life, had ceased.
'The beetle rarely murmur'd by,
No sheep-dog sent his voice so high,
Save when, by chance, far down the steep,
Crept a live speck, a straggling sheep ;
Yet one lone object, plainly seen,
Curved slowly, in a line of green,
On the brown heath : no demon fell,
No wizard foe, with magic spell,
'To chain the senses, chill the heart,
No wizard guided POWEL's cart ;

The Travellers' Repast.

He of our nectar had the care,
All our ambrosia rested there.
At leisure, but reluctant still,
We join'd him by a mountain rill ;
And there, on springing turf, all seated,
Jove's guests were never half so treated ;
Journeys they had, and feastings many,
But never came to ABERGANY ;
Lucky escape :—the wrangling crew,
Mischief to cherish or to brew,
Was all their sport ; and when, in rage,
They chose 'midst warriors to engage,
Loud for their fiery steeds they cried,
And dash'd th' opposing clouds aside,
Whirl'd through the air, and foremost stood
'Midst mortal passions, mortal blood !
Beneath *us* frown'd no deadly war,
And POWEL's wheels were safer far ;

Reflections on olden Times.

As on them, without flame or shield,
Or bow to twang, or lance to wield,
We left the heights of inspiration,
And relish'd a mere mortal station ;
Our object, not to fire a town,
Or aid a chief, or knock him down ;
But safe to sleep, from war and sorrow,
And drive to BRECKNOCK on the morrow.

HEAVY and low'ring, crowds on crowds,
Drove adverse hosts of dark'ning clouds
Low o'er the vale, and far away,
Deep gloom o'erspread the rising day ;
No morning beauties caught the eye,
O'er mountain top, or stream, or sky,
As round the castle's ruin'd tower
We mused for many a solemn hour ;

Effect of Sunshine.

And, half-dejected, half in spleen,
Computed idly, o'er the scene,
How many murders there had dy'd
Chiefs and their minions, slaves of pride ;
When perjury, in every breath,
Pluck'd the huge falchion from its sheath,
And prompted deeds of ghastly fame,
That hist'ry's self might blush to name *.

At length, through each retreating shower,
Burst, with a renovating power,
Light, life, and gladness ; instant fled
All contemplations on the dead.

Who hath not mark'd, with inward joy,
The efforts of the diving boy ;
And, waiting while he disappear'd,
Exulted, trembled, hoped, and fear'd ?

* In Jones's History of Brecknockshire, the castle of Aber-gavenny is noticed as having been the scene of the most shocking enormities.

Departure from Pen-y-Vale.

Then felt his heart, 'midst cheering cries,
Bound with delight to see him rise ?
Who hath not burnt with rage, to see
Falsehood's vile cant, and supple knee ;
'Then hail'd, on some courageous brow,
The power that works her overthrow ;
That, swift as lightning, seals her doom,
“ Hence, miscreant ! vanish !—truth is come ?”
So PEN-Y VALE upheaved his brow,
And left the world of fog below ;
So SKYRID, smiling, broke his way
To glories of the conqu'ring day ;
With matchless grace, and giant pride,
So BLORENCE turn'd the clouds aside,
And warn'd us, not a whit too soon,
To chase the flying car of noon,
Where herds and flocks unnumber'd fed,
Where USK her wand'ring mazes led.

Crickhowel.

Here on the mind, with powerful sway,
Press'd the bright joys of yesterday;
For still, though doom'd no more t' inhale
The mountain air of PEN-Y-VALE,
His broad dark-skirting woods o'erhung
Cottage and farm, where careless sung
The labourer, where the gazing steer
Low'd to the mountains, deep and clear.

SLOW less'ning BLORENCE, left behind,
Reluctantly his claims resign'd,
And stretch'd his glowing front entire,
As forward peep'd CRICKHOWEL spire;
But no proud castle's turrets gleam'd;
No warrior Earl's gay banner stream'd.
E'en of thy palace, (grief to tell!)
A tower—without a dinner bell;

Crickhowel.

An arch—where jav'lin'd sentries bow'd
Low to their chief, or fed the crowd,
Are all that mark where once a train
Of *Barons* graced thy rich domain,
Illustrious PEMBROKE*! drain'd thy bowl,
And caught the nobleness of soul—
The harp-inspired, indignant blood
That prompts to arms and hardihood.

To muse upon the days gone by,
Where desolation meets the eye,
Is double life: truth, cheaply bought,
The nurse of sense, the food of thought,
Whence judgment, ripen'd, forms, at will,
Her estimates of good or ill;
And brings contrasted scenes to view,
And weighs the *old* rogues with the *new*;

* Part of the original palace of the powerful Earls of Pembroke is still undemolished by time.

Tre Tower Castle.

Imperious tyrants, gone to dust,
With tyrants whom the world hath cursed
Through modern ages.—By what power
Rose the strong walls of old TRE TOWER
Deep in the valley ; whose clear rill
Then stole through wilds, and wanders still
Through village shades, unstain'd with gore,
Where war-steeds bathe their hoofs no more ?

Empires have fallen, armies bled,
Since yon old wall, with upright head,
Met the loud tempest ; who can trace
When first the rude mass, from its base,
Stoop'd in that dreadful form ? E'en thou,
JANE, with the placid silver brow,
Know'st not the day, though thou hast seen
A hundred * springs of cheerful green,

* Jane Edwards, or as she pronounced it, *Etwards*, a tall, bony, upright woman, leaning both hands on the head of her

Jane Edwards.

A hundred winters' snows increase
That brook,—the emblem of thy peace.
Most venerable dame ! and shall
The plund'rer, in his gorgeous hall,
His fame with Moloch-frown prefer,
And scorn *thy* harmless character,
Who scarcely hear'st of his renown,
And never sack'd or burnt a town ?
But should he crave, with coward cries,
To be Jane Edwards when he dies,
Thou'lt be the CONQUEROR, old lass,
So take thy alms, and let us pass.

FORTH, from the calm sequester'd shade,
Once more approaching twilight, bade ;

stick, and in her manners venerably impressive, was then at the age of one hundred. She was living in 1809, then one hundred and two.

The Vann.

When, as the sigh of joy arose,
And while e'en fancy sought repose,
One vast transcendant object sprung,
Arresting every eye and tongue.
Strangers, (fair BRECON,) wondering, scan
The peaks of thy stupendous VANN:
But how can strangers, chain'd by time,
Through floating clouds his summit climb?
Another day had almost fled;
A clear horizon, glowing red,
Its promise on all hearts impress'd,
Bright sunny hours, and Sabbath rest.



THE
BANKS OF WYE.

BOOK IV.

The Gaer, a Roman Station—Brunless Castle—The Hay—
Funeral Song, “ Mary’s Grave ”—Clifford Castle—Return
by Hereford, Malvern Hills, Cheltenham, and Gloucester, to
Uley—Conclusion.

’Tis sweet to hear the soothing chime,
And, by thanksgiving, measure time,
When hard-wrought poverty awhile
Upheaves the bending back to smile ;
When servants hail, with boundless glee,
The sweets of love and liberty.

The Sabbath.

Seldom has worship cheer'd my soul
With such invincible control !
It was a bright benignant hour,
The song of praise was full of power ;
And, darting from the noon-day sky,
Amidst the tide of harmony,
O'er aisle and pillar glancing strong,
Heav'n's radiant light inspired the song.
The word of peace, that can disarm
Care with its own peculiar charm,
Here flow'd a double stream, to cheer
The Saxon * and the Mountaineer,
Of various stock, of various name,
Now join'd in rights, and join'd in fame.

* Divine service is performed alternately in English and Welsh. That they still call us Saxons need hardly be mentioned. The army, it appears, is quite as accommodating as the church, for the posting bills for recruits are printed in both languages.

The Gaer.

YE who religion's duty teach,
What constitutes a Sabbath breach ?
Is it, when joy the bosom fills,
To wander o'er the breezy hills ?
Is it, to trace around your home
The footsteps of imperial Røme ?
Then guilty, guilty let us plead,
Who, on the cheerful rested steed,
In thought absorb'd, explored, with care,
'The wild lanes round the silent GAER *,

* A road must have led from Abergavenny, through the Vale of the Usk, north-west to the "Gaer," situated two miles north-west of Brecon, on a gentle eminence, at the conflux of the rivers Esker and Usk. Mr. Wyndham traced parts of walls, which he describes as exactly resembling those at Caerleon; and Mr. Lemon found several bricks, bearing the inscription of LEG. II. AVG.—*Core*.

In addition to the above, it may be acceptable to state, that Mr. Price, a very intelligent farmer on the spot, has in his pos-

Roman Station.

Where conqu'ring eagles took their stand ;
Where heathen altars stain'd the land ;
Where soldiers of AUGUSTUS pined,
Perhaps, for pleasures left behind,
And measured, from this lone abode,
The new-form'd, stony, forest road,
Back to CAERLEON'S southern train,
Their barks, their home, beyond the main :
Still by the VANN reminded strong
Of Alpine scenes, and mountain song,
The olive groves, the cloudless sky,
And golden vales of Italy.

With us 'twas peace, we met no foes ;
With us far diff'rent feelings rose.

session several of the above kind of bricks, bearing the same inscription, done, evidently, by stamping the clay, while moist, with an instrument. These have been turned up by the plough, together with several small Roman lamps.

Regrets on leaving Cambria.

Still onward inclination bade :
The wilds of MONA'S Druid shade,
SNOWDON'S sublime and stormy brow,
His land of Britons stretch'd below,
And PENMAN MAWR'S huge crags, that greet
The thund'ring ocean at his feet,
Were all before us. Hard it proved
To quit a land so dearly loved ;
Forego each bold terrific boast
Of northern Cambria's giant coast.
Friends of the harp and song, forgive
The deep regret that, whilst I live,
Shall dwell upon my heart and tongue :
Go, joys untasted ! themes unsung !
Another scene, another land,
Hence shall the homeward verse demand.
Yet fancy wove her flow'ry chain,
Till " farewell Brecon " left a pain,

Llanthony.

A pain that travellers may endure ;
Change is their food, and change their cure.
Yet, oh, how dream-like, far away,
To recollect so bright a day !
Dream-like those scenes the townsmen love,
Their tumbling USK, their PRIORY GROVE,
View'd while the moon cheer'd, calmly bright,
The freshness of a summer's night.

HIGH o'er the town, in morning smiles,
The blue VANN heaved his deep defiles ;
And ranged, like champions for the fight,
Basking in sun-beams on our right,
Rose the BLACK MOUNTAINS, that surround
That far-famed spot of holy ground,
LLANTHONY, dear to monkish tale,
And still the pride of EWAIS VALE.

Brunless Tower.

No road-side cottage smoke was seen,
Or rarely, on the village green :
No youths appear'd, in spring-tide dress,
In ardent play, or idleness.
Brown waved the harvest, dale and slope
Exulting bore a nation's hope ;
Sheaves rose as far as sight could range,
And every mile was but a change
Of peasants lab'ring, lab'ring still,
And climbing many a distant hill.
Some talk'd, perhaps, of spring's bright hour,
And how they piled, in BRUNLESS TOWER *,
The full-dried hay. Perhaps they told
Tradition's tales, and taught how old
The ruin'd castle ? False or true,
They guess'd it—just as others do.

* The only remaining tower of Brunless Castle now makes an excellent hay-loft ; and almost every building on the spot is composed of fragments.

Brunless Tower.

Lone tower ! though suffer'd yet to stand,
Dilapidation's wasting hand
Shall tear thy pond'rous walls, to guard
The slumb'ring steed, or fence the yard ;
Or wheels shall grind thy pride away
Along the turnpike road to HAY,
Where fierce GLENDOW'R'S rude mountaineers
Left war's attendants, blood and tears,
And spread their terrors many a mile,
And shouted round the flaming pile.
May Heav'n preserve our native land
From blind ambition's murdering hand ;
From all the wrongs that can provoke
A people's wrath, and urge the stroke
That shakes the proudest throne ! Guard, Heav'n,
The sacred birth-right thou hast given ;
Bid justice curb, with strong control,
The desp'rate passions of the soul.

Flowers on Graves.

Here ivy'd fragments, lowering, throw
Broad shadows on the poor below,
Who, while they rest, and when they die,
Sleep on the rock-built shores of WYE.

To tread o'er nameless mounds of earth,
To muse upon departed worth,
To credit still the poor distress'd,
For feelings never half express'd,
Their hopes, their faith, their tender love,
Faith that sustain'd, and hope that strove,
Is sacred joy ; to heave a sigh,
A debt to poor mortality.
Funereal rites are closed ; 'tis done ;
Ceased is the bell ; the priest is gone ;
What then if bust or stone denies
To catch the pensive loit'rer's eyes,
What course can poverty pursue ?
What can the *poor* pretend to do ?

Flowers on Graves.

O boast not, quarries, of your store ;
Boast not, O man, of wealth or lore :
The flowers of nature here shall thrive,
Affection keep those flowers alive ;
And they shall strike the melting heart,
Beyond the utmost power of art ;
Planted on graves *, their stems entwine,
And every blossom is a line

* To the custom of scattering flowers over the graves of departed friends, David ap Gwilym beautifully alludes in one of his odes. “ O, whilst thy season of flowers, and thy tender sprays thick of leaves remain, I will pluck the roses from the brakes, the flowerets of the meads, and gems of the wood ; the vivid trefoil, beauties of the ground, and the gaily-smiling bloom of the verdant herbs, to be offered to the memory of a chief of fairest fame. Humbly will I lay them on the grave of Ivor.”

On a grave in the churchyard at Hay, or The Hay, as it is commonly spoken, flowers had evidently been *planted*, but only one solitary sprig of sweet-briar had taken root.

Flowers on Graves.

Indelibly impress'd, that tends,
In more than language comprehends,
To teach us, in our solemn hours,
That we ourselves are dying flowers.

What if a father buried here
His earthly hope, his friend most dear,
His only child? Shall his dim eye,
At poverty's command, be dry?
No, he shall muse, and think, and pray,
And weep his tedious hours away;
Or weave the song of woe to tell
How dear that child he loved so well.

Mary's Grave.

MARY'S GRAVE.

No child have I left, I must wander alone,

 No light-hearted Mary to sing as I go,

Nor loiter to gather bright flowers newly blown ;

 She delighted, sweet maid, in these emblems of
 woe.

Then the stream glided by her, or playfully boil'd

 O'er its rock-bed unceasing, and still it flows
 free ;

But her infant life was arrested, unsoil'd

 As the dew-drop, when shook by the wing of the
 bee.

Mary's Grave.

Sweet flowers were her treasures, and flowers shall
be mine ;

I bring them from Radnor's green hills to her
grave :

Thus planted in anguish, oh let them entwine

O'er a heart once as gentle as Heav'n e'er gave.

Oh, the glance of her eye, when at mansions of
wealth

I pointed, suspicious, and warn'd her of harm ;

She smiled in content, 'midst the bloom of her
health,

And closer and closer still hung on my arm.

What boots it to tell of the sense she possess'd,

The fair buds of promise that mem'ry endears ?

The mild dove, affection, was queen of her breast,

And I had her love, and her truth, and her
tears ;

Clifford Castle.

She was mine. But she goes to the land of the good,
A change which I must, and yet dare, not deplore :
I 'll bear the rude shock like the oak of the wood,
But the green hills of Radnor will charm me no
more.

RUINS of greatness, all farewell ;
No Chepstows here, no Raglands tell,
By mound, or foss, or mighty tower,
Achievements high in hall or bower ;
Or give to fancy's vivid eye
The helms and plumes of chivalry.
CLIFFORD has fall'n, howe'er sublime,
Mere fragments wrestle still with time ;
Yet as they perish, sure and slow,
And rolling dash the stream below,
They raise tradition's glowing scene,
The clue of silk, the wrathful queen,

Fairy Voyage.

And link, in mem'ry's firmest bond,
The love-lorn tale of Rosamond *.

How placid, how divinely sweet,
The flow'r-grown brook that, by our feet,
Winds a on summer's day; e'en where
Its name no classic honours share,
Its springs untraced, its course unknown,
Seaward, for ever rambling down!

Here, then, how sweet, pellucid, chaste;
'Twas *this* bright current bade us taste
The fulness of its joy. Glide still,
Enchantress of PLYNLIMON HILL,
Meandering WYE! Still let me dream,
In raptures, o'er thy infant stream;
For could th' immortal soul forego
Its cumbrous load of earthly woe,

* Clifford Castle is supposed to have been the birth-place of Fair Rosamond.

Fairy Voyage.

And clothe itself in fairy guise,
Too small, too pure, for human eyes,
Blithe would we seek thy utmost spring,
Where mountain-larks first try the wing;
There, at the crimson dawn of day,
Launch a scoop'd leaf, and sail away,
Stretch'd at our ease, or crouch below,
Or climb the green transparent prow,
Stooping where oft the blue-bell sips
The passing stream, and shakes and dips;
And when the heifer came to drink,
Quick from the gale our bark would shrink,
And huddle down amidst the brawl
Of many a five-inch waterfall,
Till the expanse should fairly give
The bow'ring hazel room to live;
And as each swelling junction came,
To form a riv'let worth a name,

Fairy Voyage.

We'd dart beneath, or brush away
Long-beaded webs, that else might stay
Our silent course ; in haste retreat,
Where whirlpools near the bull-rush meet ;
Wheel round the ox of monstrous size ;
And count below his shadowy flies ;
And sport amidst the throng ; and when
We met the barks of giant men,
Avoid their oars, still undescried,
And mock their overbearing pride ;
Then vanish by some magic spell,
And shout, " Delicious WYE, farewell !"

'Twas noon, when o'er thy mountain stream,
The carriage roll'd, each pow'ful gleam
Struck on thy surface, where, below,
Spread the deep heaven's azure glow ;

Adieu to Wales.

And water-flowers, a mingling crowd,
Waved in the dazzling silver cloud.
Again farewell ! The treat is o'er !
For me shall Cambria smile no more ;
Yet truth shall still the song sustain,
And touch the springs of joy again.

Hail ! land of cyder, vales of health !
Redundant fruitage, rural wealth ;
Here, did *Pomona* still retain
Her influence o'er a British plain,
Might temples rise, spring blossoms fly
Round the capricious deity ;
Or autumn sacrifices bound,
By myriads, o'er the hallow'd ground,
And deep libations still renew
The fervours of her dancing crew.
Land of delight ! let mem'ry strive
To keep thy flying scenes alive ;

Herefordshire.

Thy grey-limb'd orchards, scattering wide
Their treasures by the highway side ;
Thy half-hid cottages, that show
The dark green moss, the resting bough,
At broken panes, that taps and flies,
Illumes and shades the maiden's eyes
At day-break, and, with whisper'd joy,
Wakes the light-hearted shepherd boy :
These, with thy noble woods and dells,
The hazel copse, the village bells,
Charm'd more the passing sultry hours
Than HEREFORD, with all her towers.

Sweet was the rest, with welcome cheer,
But a far nobler scene was near ;
And when the morrow's noon had spread,
O'er orchard stores, the deep'ning red,
Behind us rose the billowy cloud,
That dims the air to city crowd.

Canfrome.

And deem not that, where cyder reigns
The beverage of a thousand plains,
Malt, and the liberal harvest horn,
Are all unknown, or laugh'd to scorn ;
A spot that all delights might bring,
A palace for an eastern king,
CANFROME*, shall from her vaults display
John Barleycorn's resistless sway.
To make the odds of fortune even,
Up bounced the cork of "*seventy-seven*,"
And sent me back to school ; for *then*,
Ere yet I learn'd to wield the pen ;
(The pen that should all crimes assail,
'The pen that leads to fame—or jail ;)

* The noble seat of Richard Cope Hopton, Esq. which exhibits, in a striking manner, the real old English magnificence and hospitality of the last age.

Malvern Hills.

Then steam'd the malt, whose spirit bears
 The frosts and suns of thirty years !
 Through LEDBURY, at decline of day,
 The wheels that bore us roll'd away
 To cross the MALVERN HILLS. 'Twas night ;
 Alternate met the weary sight
 Each steep, dark, undulating brow,
 And WORC'STER'S gloomy vale below.
 Gloomy no more, when eastward sprung
 The light that gladdens heart and tongue ;
 When morn glanced o'er the shepherd's bed,
 And cast her tints of lovely red
 Wide o'er the vast expanding scene,
 And mix'd her hues with mountain green ;
 Then, gazing from a height so fair,
 Through miles of unpolluted air,
 Where cultivation triumphs wide,
 O'er boundless views on every side,

Malvern.

Thick planted towns, where toils ne'er cease,
And far spread silent village peace ;
As each succeeding pleasure came,
The heart acknowledged MALVERN'S fame.

Oft glancing thence to Cambria still,
Thou yet wert seen, my fav'rite hill,
Delightful PEN-Y-VALE ! Nor shall
Great MALVERN'S high imperious call
Wean me from thee, or turn aside
My earliest charm, my heart's strong pride.

Boast, MALVERN, that thy springs revive
The drooping patient, scarce alive ;
Where, as he gathers strength to toil,
Not e'en thy heights his spirit foil,
But nerve him on to bless, t' inhale,
And triumph in the morning gale ;
Or noon's transcendent glories give
The vigorous touch that bids him live.

Malvern.

Perhaps e'en now he stops to breathe,
Surveying the expanse beneath ;
Now climbs again, where keen winds blow,
And holds his beaver to his brow ;
Waves to the *Wrecker* his pale hand,
And, borrowing Fancy's magic wand,
Skims over WORC'STER's spires away,
Where sprung the blush of rising day ;
And eyes with joy sweet *Hagley Groves*,
That taste reveres and virtue loves ;
And stretch'd upon thy utmost ridge,
Marks Severn's course, and UPTON-bridge,
That leads to home, to friends, or wife,
And all thy sweets, domestic life :
While starts the tear, his bosom glows,
That consecrated *Avon* flows
Down the blue distant vale, to yield
Its stores by TEWKESBURY's deadly field,

Vale of Severn.—Tewkesbury.

And feels whatever can inspire,
From history's page or poet's fire.

BRIGHT vale of Severn! shall the song
That wildly devious roves along,
The charms of nature to explore,
On history rest, or themes of yore?
More joy the thoughts of home supply;
Short be the glance at days gone by,
Though gallant TEWKESBURY, clean and gay,
Hath much to tempt the traveller's stay—
Her noble abbey, with its dead,
A powerful claim: a silent dread,
Sacred as holy virtue, springs
Where rests the dust of chiefs and kings;
With his who by foul murder died,
The fierce Lancastrian's hope and pride,

Gloucester.

(When brothers brothers could destroy)

Heroic Margaret's *red-rose* boy*.

Muse, turn thee from the field of blood,

Rest to the brave, peace to the good :

Avon, with all thy charms, adieu !

For CHELTENHAM mocks thy pilgrim crew ;

And like a girl in beauty's power,

Flirts in the fairings of an hour.

Queen of the valley ! soon behind

Gleam'd thy bright fanes, in sun and wind,

Fair Glo'ster. Though thy fabric stands,

The boast of Severn's winding sands,

If grandeur, beauty, grace, can stay

The traveller on his homeward way.

* Prince Edward, son of Henry the Sixth, taken prisoner with his mother, Margaret of Anjou, at the battle of Tewkesbury, and murdered by the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard the Third.

Gloucester.

There rests the Norman prince who rose
In zeal against the christians' foes,
Yet doom'd at home to pine and die,
Of birthright robb'd, and liberty ;
His tide of wrongs he could not stem,
His brothers filch'd his diadem*.
There sleeps the king who aim'd to spurn
The daring Scots, at Bannockburn ;
But turn'd him back, with humbled fame,
And *Berkley's* " *shrieks* †" declare his name.

Cease, cease the lay—the goal is won—
Yet memory still shall revel on.
Fast closed the day, the last bright hour,
The setting sun, on DURSLEY tower,

* The eldest son of William the Conqueror was imprisoned eight-and-twenty years by his own brother !

† " Shrieks of an agonizing king."

Conclusion.

Welcomed us home, and forward bade,
 'To ULEY valley's peaceful shade.

Who so unfeeling, who so bold,
 To judge that fictions, idly told,
 Deform my verse, that only tries
 To consecrate realities?
 If e'er th' unworthy thought should come,
 Let strong conviction strike them dumb.
 Go to the proof ; your steed prepare,
 Drink nature's cup, the rapture share ;
 If dull you find your devious course,
 Your tour is useless—sell your horse.

Ye who, ingulf'd in trade, endure
 What gold alone can never cure ;
 The constant sigh for scenes of peace,
 From the world's trammels free release,

Conclusion.

Wait not, (for reason's sake attend,)
Wait not in chains till times shall mend ;
'Till the clear voice, grown hoarse and gruff,
Cries, " Now I 'll go, I'm rich enough."
Youth, and the prime of manhood, seize ;
Steal ten days absence, ten days ease ;
Bid ledgers from your minds depart ;
Let mem'ry's treasures cheer the heart ;
And when your children round you grow,
With opening charms and manly brow,
Talk of the WYE as some old dream,
Call it the wild, the wizard stream ;
Sink in your broad arm-chair to rest,
And youth shall smile to see you bless'd.

Artists, betimes your powers employ,
And take the pilgrimage of joy ;
The eye of genius may behold
A thousand beauties here untold ;

Conclusion.

Rock, that defies the winter's storm ;
Wood, in its most imposing form,
'That climbs the mountain, bows below,
Where deep th' unsullied waters flow.
Here *Gilpin's* eye, transported, scann'd
Views by no tricks of fancy plann'd ;
Gray here, upon the stream reclined,
Stored with delight his ardent mind.
But let the vacant trifler stray
From thy enchantments far away ;
For should, from fashion's rainbow train,
'The idle and the vicious vain
In sacrilege presume to move
Through these dear scenes of peace and love,
'The *spirit of the stream* would rise
In wrathful mood and tenfold size,
And nobly guard his COLDWELL SPRING,
And bid his inmost caverns ring ;

Conclusion.

Loud thund'ring on the giddy crew,
" My stream was never meant for you."
But ye, to nobler feelings born,
Who sense and nature dare not scorn,
Glide gaily on, and ye shall find
The blest serenity of mind
That springs from silence ; or shall raise
The hand, the eye, the voice of praise.
Live then, sweet stream ! and henceforth be
The darling of posterity ;
Loved for thyself, for ever dear,
Like beauty's smile and virtue's tear,
'Till 'Time his striding race give o'er,
And verse itself shall charm no more.

MAY-DAY WITH THE MUSES.



PREFACE.

I AM of opinion that Prefaces are very useless things in cases like the present, where the Author must talk of himself, with little amusement to his readers. I have hesitated whether I should say any thing or nothing; but as it is the fashion to say something, I suppose I must comply. I am well aware that many readers will exclaim—"It is not the common practice of English baronets to remit half a year's rent to their tenants for poetry, or for any thing else." This may be very true; but I have found a character in the Rambler, No. 82, who made a very different bargain, and who says, "And as Alfred received the tribute of the Welsh in wolves' heads, I allowed my tenants to pay their rents in butterflies, till I had exhausted the papilionaceous tribe. I then directed

Preface.

“ them to the pursuit of other animals, and obtained,
“ by this easy method, most of the grubs and insects
“ which land, air, or water can supply.
“ I have, from my own ground, the longest blade of
“ grass upon record, and once accepted, as a half
“ year’s rent for a field of wheat, an ear, containing
“ more grains than had been seen before upon a single
“ stem.”

I hope my old Sir Ambrose stands in no need of defence from me or from any one; a man has a right to do what he likes with his own estate. The characters I have introduced as candidates may not come off so easily; a cluster of poets is not likely to be found in one village, and the following lines, written by my good friend T. Park, Esq. of Hampstead, are not only true, but beautifully true, and I cannot omit them.

Preface.

WRITTEN IN THE ISLE OF THANET,

August, 1790.

The bard, who paints from rural plains,
Must oft himself the void supply
Of damsels pure and artless swains,
Of innocence and industry :

For sad experience shows the heart
Of human beings much the same ;
Or polish'd by insidious art,
Or rude as from the clod it came.

And he who roams the village round,
Or strays amid the harvest sere,
Will hear, as now, too many a sound
Quiet would never wish to hear.

The wrangling rustics' loud abuse,
The coarse, unfeeling, witless jest,

Preface.

The threat obscene, the oath profuse,
And all that cultured minds detest.

Hence let those sylvan poets glean,
Who picture life without a flaw;
Nature may form a perfect scene,
But Fancy must the figures draw.

The word “fancy” connects itself with my very childhood, fifty years back. The fancy of those who wrote the songs which I was obliged to hear in infancy was a very inanimate and sleepy fancy. I could enumerate a dozen songs at least which all described sleeping shepherds and shepherdesses, and, in one instance, where they both went to sleep: this is not fair certainly; it is not even “watch and watch.”

“As Damon and Phillis were keeping of sheep,

“Being free from all care they retired to sleep,” &c.

I must say, that if I understand any thing at all about

Preface.

keeping sheep, this is not the way to go to work with them. But such characters and such writings were fashionable, and fashion will beat common sense at any time.

With all the beauty and spirit of Cunningham's "Kate of Aberdeen," and some others, I never found any thing to strike my mind so forcibly as the last stanza of Dibdin's "Sailor's Journal"—

"At length, 'twas in the month of May,
"Our crew, it being lovely weather,
"At three A. M. discover'd day
"And England's chalky cliffs together!
"At seven up channel how we bore,
"Whilst hopes and fears rush'd o'er each fancy!
"At twelve I gaily jump'd on shore,
"And to my throbbing heart press'd Nancy."

This, to my feelings, is a balm at all times; it is spirit, animation, and imagery, all at once.

I will plead no excuses for any thing which the reader may find in this little volume, but merely state, that I

Preface.

once met with a lady in London, who, though otherwise of strong mind and good information, would maintain that “it is impossible for a blind man to fall in love.” I always thought her wrong, and the present tale of “Alfred and Jennet” is written to elucidate my side of the question.

I have been reported to be dead; but I can assure the reader that this, like many other reports, is not true. I have written these tales in anxiety, and in a wretched state of health; and if these formidable foes have not incapacitated me, but left me free to meet the public eye with any degree of credit, that degree of credit I am sure I shall gain.

I am, with remembrance of what is past,

Most respectfully,

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD.

Shefford, Bedfordshire,

April 10th, 1822.

MAY-DAY WITH THE MUSES.

THE INVITATION.

O FOR the strength to paint my joy once more !
That joy I feel when Winter's reign is o'er ;
When the dark despot lifts his hoary brow,
And seeks his polar-realm's eternal snow.
Though black November's fogs oppress my brain,
Shake every nerve, and struggling fancy chain ;
Though time creeps o'er me with his palsied hand,
And frost-like bids the stream of passion stand,

The Invitation.

And through his dry teeth sends a shivering blast,
And points to more than fifty winters past,
Why should I droop with heartless, aimless eye ?
Friends start around, and all my phantoms fly,
And Hope, upsoaring with expanded wing,
Unfolds a scroll, inscribed "Remember Spring."
Stay, sweet enchantress, charmer of my days,
And glance thy rainbow colours o'er my lays ;
Be to poor Giles what thou hast ever been,
His heart's warm solace and his sovereign queen ;
Dance with his rustics when the laugh runs high,
Live in the lover's heart, the maiden's eye ;
Still be propitious when his feet shall stray
Beneath the bursting hawthorn-buds of May ;
Warm every thought, and brighten every hour,
And let him feel thy presence and thy power.

SIR AMBROSE HIGHAM, in his eightieth year,
With memory unimpair'd, and conscience clear.

The Invitation.

His English heart untrammell'd, and full blown
His senatorial honours and renown,
Now, basking in his plenitude of fame,
Resolved, in concert with his noble dame,
To drive to town no more—no more by night
To meet in crowded courts a blaze of light,
In streets a roaring mob with flags unfurl'd,
And all the senseless discord of the world,—
But calmly wait the hour of his decay,
The broad bright sunset of his glorious day;
And where he first drew breath at last to fall,
Beneath the towering shades of Oakly Hall *.

Quick spread the news through hamlet, field, and farm,
The labourer wiped his brow and staid his arm;

* The seat of Sir Ambrose is situated in the author's imagination only; the reader must build Oakly Hall where he pleases.

The Invitation.

'Twas news to him of more importance far
Than change of empires or the yells of war ;
It breathed a hope which nothing could destroy,
Poor widows rose, and clapp'd their hands for joy,
Glad voices rang at every cottage door,
“ Good old Sir Ambrose goes to town no more.”
Well might the village bells the triumphs sound,
Well might the voice of gladness ring around ;
Where sickness raged, or want allied to shame,
Sure as the sun his well-timed succour came ;
Food for the starving child, and warmth and wine
For age that totter'd in its last decline.
From him they shared the embers' social glow ;
He fed the flame that glanced along the snow,
When winter drove his storms across the sky,
And pierced the bones of shrinking poverty.

Sir Ambrose loved the Muses, and would pay
Due honours even to the ploughman's lay ;

The Invitation.

Would cheer the feebler bard, and with the strong
Soar to the noblest energies of song ;
Catch the rib-shaking laugh, or from his eye
Dash silently the tear of sympathy.
Happy old man !—with feelings such as these
The seasons all can charm, and trifles please ;
And hence a sudden thought, a new-born whim,
Would shake his cup of pleasure to the brim,
Turn scoffs and doubts and obstacles aside,
And instant action follow like a tide.

Time past, he had on his paternal ground
With pride the latent sparks of genius found
In many a local ballad, many a tale,
As wild and brief as cowslips in the dale,
Though unrecorded as the gleams of light
That vanish in the quietness of night.

The Invitation.

“ Why not,” he cried, as from his couch he rose,
“ To cheer my age, and sweeten my repose,
“ Why not be just and generous in time,
“ And bid my tenants pay their rents in rhyme ?
“ For one half year they shall.—A feast shall bring
“ A crowd of merry faces in the spring ;—
“ Here, pens, boy, pens ; I ’ll weigh the case no more,
“ But write the summons :—go, go, shut the door.

“ ‘ All ye on Oakly manor dwelling,
‘ Farming, labouring, buying, selling,
‘ Neighbours ! banish gloomy looks,
‘ My gray old steward shuts his books.
‘ Let not a thought of winter’s rent
‘ Destroy one evening’s merriment ;
‘ I ask not gold, but tribute found
‘ Abundant on Parnassian ground.

The Invitation.

- ‘ Choose, ye who boast the gift, your themes
‘ Of joy or pathos, tales or dreams,
‘ Choose each a theme ;—but, harkye, bring
‘ No stupid ghost, no vulgar thing ;
‘ Fairies, indeed, may wind their way,
‘ And sparkle through the brightest lay :
‘ I love their pranks, their favourite green,
‘ And, could the little sprites be seen,
‘ Were I a king, I ’d sport with them,
‘ And dance beneath my diadem.
‘ But surely fancy need not brood
‘ O’er midnight darkness, crimes, and blood,
‘ In magic cave or monk’s retreat,
‘ Whilst the bright world is at her feet ;
‘ Whilst to her boundless range is given,
‘ By night, by day, the lights of heaven,
‘ And all they shine upon ; whilst Love
‘ Still reigns the monarch of the grove,

The Invitation.

‘ And real life before her lies
‘ In all its thousand, thousand dies.
‘ Then bring me nature, bring me sense,
‘ And joy shall be your recompense :
‘ On Old May-day I hope to see
‘ All happy :—leave the rest to me.
‘ A general feast shall cheer us all
‘ Upon the lawn that fronts the hall,
‘ With tents for shelter, laurel boughs,
‘ And wreaths of every flower that blows.
‘ The months are wending fast away ;
‘ Farewell,—remember Old May-day.’ ”

Surprise, and mirth, and gratitude, and jeers,
The clown’s broad wonder, th’ enthusiast’s tears,
Fresh gleams of comfort on the brow of care,
The sectary’s cold shrug, the miser’s stare,
Were all excited, for the tidings flew
As quick as scandal the whole country through.

The Invitation.

“ Rent paid by rhymes at Oakly may be great,
“ But rhymes for taxes would appal the state,”
Exclaim’d th’ exciseman,—“ and then tithes, alas !
“ Why there, again, ’twill never come to pass.”—
Thus all still ventured, as the whim inclined,
Remarks as various as the varying mind :
For here Sir Ambrose sent a challenge forth,
That claim’d a tribute due to sterling worth ;
And all, whatever might their host regale,
Agreed to share the feast and drink his ale.

Now shot through many a heart a secret fire,
A new born spirit, an intense desire
For once to catch a spark of local fame,
And bear a poet’s honourable name !
Already some aloft began to soar,
And some to think who never thought before ;

The Invitation.

But O, what numbers all their strength applied,
Then threw despairingly the task aside
With feign'd contempt, and vow'd they'd never tried.
Did dairy-wife neglect to turn her cheese,
Or idling miller lose the favouring breeze ;
Did the young ploughman o'er the furrows stand,
Or stalking sower swing an empty hand,
One common sentence on their heads would fall,
'Twas Oakly banquet had bewitch'd them all.
Loud roar'd the winds of March, with whirling snow,
One brightening hour an April breeze would blow ;
Now hail, now hoar-frost bent the flow'ret's head,
Now struggling beams their languid influence shed,
'That scarce a cowering bird yet dared to sing
'Midst the wild changes of our island spring.
Yet, shall the Italian goatherd boasting cry,
" Poor Albion ! when hadst thou so clear a sky !"
And deem that nature smiles for him alone,
Her renovated beauties all his own ?

The Invitation.

No :—let our April showers by night descend,
Noon's genial warmth with twilight stillness blend ;
The broad Atlantic pour her pregnant breath,
And rouse the vegetable world from death ;
Our island spring is rapture's self to me,
All I have seen, and all I wish to see.

Thus came the jovial day, no streaks of red
O'er the broad portal of the morn were spread,
But one high-sailing mist of dazzling white,
A screen of gossamer, a magic light,
Doom'd instantly, by simplest shepherd's ken,
To reign awhile, and be exhaled at ten.
O'er leaves, o'er blossoms, by his power restored,
Forth came the conquering sun and look'd abroad ;
Millions of dew-drops fell, yet millions hung,
Like words of transport trembling on the tongue
Too strong for utt'rance :—Thus the infant boy,
With rosebud cheeks, and features tuned to joy,

The Invitation.

Weeps while he struggles with restraint or pain,
But change the scene, and make him laugh again,
His heart rekindles, and his cheek appears
A thousand times more lovely through his tears.
From the first glimpse of day a busy scene
Was that high swelling lawn, that destined green,
Which shadowless expanded far and wide,
The mansion's ornament, the hamlet's pride ;
To cheer, to order, to direct, contrive,
Even old Sir Ambrose had been up at five ;
There his whole household labour'd in his view,—
But light is labour where the task is new.
Some wheel'd the turf to build a grassy throne
Round a huge thorn that spread his boughs alone,
Rough-rind'd and bold, as master of the place ;
Five generations of the Higham race
Had pluck'd his flowers, and still he held his sway,
Waved his white head, and felt the breath of May.

The Invitation.

Some from the green-house ranged exotics round,
To bask in open day on English ground :
And 'midst them in a line of splendour drew
Long wreaths and garlands, gather'd in the dew.
Some spread the snowy canvas, propp'd on high
O'er shelter'd tables with their whole supply ;
Some swung the biting scythe with merry face,
And cropp'd the daisies for a dancing space.
Some roll'd the mouldy barrel in his might,
From prison'd darkness into cheerful light,
And fenced him round with cans ; and others bore
The creaking hamper with its costly store,
Well cork'd, well flavour'd, and well tax'd, that came
From Lusitanian mountains, dear to fame,
Whence GAMA steer'd, and led the conquering way
To eastern triumphs and the realms of day.
A thousand minor tasks fill'd every hour,
'Till the sun gain'd the zenith of his power,

The Invitation.

When every path was throng'd with old and young,
And many a sky-lark in his strength upsprung
To bid them welcome.—Not a face was there
But for May-day at least had banish'd care ;
No cringing looks, no pauper tales to tell,
No timid glance, they knew their host too well,—
Freedom was there, and joy in every eye :
Such scenes were England's boast in days gone by.
Beneath the thorn was good Sir Ambrose found,
His guests an ample crescent form'd around ;
Nature's own carpet spread the space between,
Where blithe domestics plied in gold and green.
The venerable chaplain waved his wand,
And silence follow'd as he stretch'd his hand,
And with a trembling voice, and heart sincere,
Implored a blessing on th' abundant cheer.
Down sat the mingling throng, and shared a feast
With hearty welcomes given, by love increased ;

The Invitation.

A patriarch family, a close-link'd band,
True to their rural chieftain, heart and hand :
The deep carouse can never boast the bliss,
The animation of a scene like this.

At length the damask cloths were whisk'd away,
Like fluttering sails upon a summer's day ;
The hey-day of enjoyment found repose ;
The worthy baronet majestic rose ;
They view'd him, while his ale was filling round,
The monarch of his own paternal ground.
His cup was full, and where the blossoms bow'd
Over his head, Sir Ambrose spoke aloud,
Nor stopp'd a dainty form or phrase to cull—
His heart elated, like his cup, was full :—
“ Full be your hopes, and rich the crops that fall ;
“ Health to my neighbours, happiness to all.”
Dull must that clown be, dull as winter's sleet,
Who would not instantly be on his feet :

The Invitation.

An echoing health to mingling shouts gave place,
“ Sir Ambrose Higham, and his noble race.”

Avaunt, Formality! thou bloodless dame,
With dripping besom quenching nature's flame;
Thou cankerworm, who liv'st but to destroy,
And eat the very heart of social joy;—
Thou freezing mist round intellectual mirth,
Thou spell-bound vagabond of spurious birth,
Away! away! and let the sun shine clear,
And all the kindnesses of life appear.

With mild complacency, and smiling brow,
The host look'd round, and bade the goblets flow;
Yet curiously anxious to behold
Who first would pay in rhymes instead of gold;
Each eye inquiring through the ring was glauced
To see who dared the task, who first advanced;

The Drunken Father.

That instant started Philip from the throng,
Philip, a farmer's son, well known for song,—
And, as the mingling whispers round him ran,
He humbly bow'd, and timidly began :—

THE DRUNKEN FATHER.

Poor Ellen married Andrew Hall,
Who dwells beside the moor,
Where yonder rose-tree shades the wall,
And woodbines grace the door.

Who does not know how blest, how loved
Were her mild laughing eyes
By every youth !—but Andrew proved
Unworthy of his prize.

In tippling was his whole delight,
Each sign-post barr'd his way ;

The Drunken Father.

He spent in muddy ale at night
The wages of the day.

Though Ellen still had charms, was young,
And he in manhood's prime,
She sad beside her cradle sung,
And sigh'd away her time.

One cold bleak night, the stars were hid,
In vain she wish'd him home ;
Her children cried, half cheer'd, half chid,
“ O when will father come !”

Till Caleb, nine years old, upsprung,
And kick'd his stool aside,
And younger Mary round him clung,
“ I'll go, and you shall guide.”

The Drunken Father.

The children knew each inch of ground,
Yet Ellen had her fears ;
Light from the lantern glimmer'd round,
And show'd her falling tears.

“ Go by the mill and down the lane ;
“ Return the same way home :
“ Perhaps you 'll meet him, give him light ;
“ O how I *wish* he 'd come !”

Away they went, as close and true
As lovers in the shade,
And Caleb swung his father's staff
At every step he made.

The noisy mill-clack rattled on,
They saw the water flow,
And leap in silvery foam along,
Deep murmuring below.

The Drunken Father.

“ We’ll soon be there,” the hero said,
“ Come on, ’tis but a mile,—
“ Here’s where the cricket-match was play’d,
“ And here’s the shady stile.

“ How the light shines up every bough !
“ How strange the leaves appear !
“ Hark !—What was that ?—’tis silent now,
“ Come, Mary, never fear.”

The staring oxen breathed aloud,
But never dream’d of harm ;
A meteor glanced along the cloud
That hung o’er Wood-Hill Farm.

Old Cæsar bark’d and howl’d hard by,
All else was still as death ;
But Caleb was ashamed to cry,
And Mary held her breath.

The Drunken Father.

At length they spied a distant light,
And heard a chorus brawl;
Wherever drunkards stopp'd at night,
Why there was Andrew Hall.

The house was full, the landlord gay,
The bar-maid shook her head,
And wish'd the boobies far away
That kept her out of bed.

'There Caleb enter'd, firm, but mild,
And spoke in plaintive tone:—
“ My mother could not leave the child,
“ So we are come alone.”

E'en drunken Andrew felt the blow
That innocence can give,
When its resistless accents flow
To bid affection live.

The Drunken Father.

“ I ’m coming, loves, I ’m coming now,”—

Then, shuffling o’er the floor,
Contrived to make his balance true,
And led them from the door.

The plain broad path that brought him there
By day, though faultless then,
Was up and down and narrow grown,
Though wide enough for ten.

The stiles were wretchedly contrived,
The stars were all at play,
And many a ditch had moved itself
Exactly in his way.

But still conceit was uppermost,
That stupid kind of pride :—
“ Dost think I cannot see a post ?
“ Dost think I want a guide ?

The Drunken Father.

“ Why, Mary, how you twist and twirl !

“ Why dost not keep the track ?

“ I ’ll carry thee home safe, my girl,”—

Then swung her on his back.

Poor Caleb muster’d all his wits

To bear the light ahead,

As Andrew reel’d and stopp’d by fits,

Or ran with thund’ring tread.

Exult, ye brutes, traduced and scorn’d,

Though true to nature’s plan ;

Exult, ye bristled, and ye horn’d,

When infants govern man.

Down to the mill-pool’s dangerous brink

The headlong party drove ;

The boy alone had power to think,

While Mary scream’d above.

The Drunken Father.

“ Stop !” Caleb cried, “ you ’ve lost the path ;
“ The water ’s close before ;
“ I see it shine, ’tis very deep,—
“ Why, don’t you hear it roar ?”

And then in agony exclaim’d,
“ O where ’s my mother *now* ?”
The Solomon of hops and malt
Stopp’d short and made a bow :

His head was loose, his neck disjointed,
It cost him little trouble ;
But, to be stopp’d and disappointed,
Poh ! danger was a bubble.

Onward he stepp’d, the boy alert,
Calling his courage forth,
Hung like a log on Andrew’s skirt,
And down he brought them both.

The Drunken Father.

The tumb'ling lantern reach'd the stream,
Its hissing light soon gone ;
'Twas night, without a single gleam,
And terror reign'd alone.

A general scream the miller heard,
Then rubb'd his eyes and ran,
And soon his welcome light appear'd,
As grumbling he began :—

“ What have we here, and whereabouts ?
“ Why what a hideous squall !
“ Some drunken fool ! I thought as much—
“ 'Tis only Andrew Hall !

“ Poor children !” tenderly he said,
“ But now the danger 's past.”
They thank'd him for his light and aid,
And drew near home at last.

The Drunken Father.

But who upon the misty path
To meet them forward press'd?
'Twas Ellen, shivering, with a babe
Close folded to her breast.

Said Andrew, " Now you 're glad, I know,
" To se-se-see us come ;—
" But I have taken care of both,
" And brought them bo-bo-both safe home."

With Andrew vex'd, of Mary proud,
But prouder of her boy,
She kiss'd them both, and sobb'd aloud,—
The children cried for joy.

But what a home at last they found !
Of comforts all bereft ;
The fire out, the last candle gone,
And not one penny left !

The Drunken Father.

But Caleb quick as lightuing flew,
And raised a light instead ;
And as the kindling brands he blew,
His father snored in bed.

No brawling, boxing termagant
Was Ellen, though offended ;
Who ever knew a fault like this
By violence amended ?

No :—she was mild as April morn,
And Andrew loved her too ;
She rose at daybreak, though forlorn,
To try what love could do.

And as her waking husband groan'd,
And roll'd his burning head,
She spoke with all the power of truth,
Down kneeling by his bed.

The Drunken Father.

“ Dear Andrew, hear me,—though distress’d

“ Almost too much to speak,—

“ This infant starves upon my breast—

“ To scold I am too weak.

“ I work, I spin, I toil all day,

“ Then leave my work to cry,

“ And start with horror when I think

“ You wish to see me die.

“ But *do* you wish it? can that bring

“ More comfort, or more joy?

“ Look round the house, how destitute!

“ Look at your ragged boy!

“ That boy should make a father proud,

“ If any feeling can;

“ Then save your children, save your wife,

“ Your honour as a man.

The Drunken Father.

“ Hear me, for God’s sake hear me now,

“ And act a father’s part !”

The culprit bless’d her angel tongue,

And clasp’d her to his heart ;

And would have vow’d, and would have sworn,

But Ellen kiss’d him dumb,—

“ Exert your mind, vow to *yourself*,

“ And better days will come.

“ I shall be well when you are kind,

“ And you’ll be better too.”—

“ I’ll drink no more,”—he quick rejoin’d,—

“ Be ’t poison if I do.”

From that bright day his plants, his flowers,

His crops began to thrive,

And for three years has Andrew been

The soberest man alive.

Rustic Conversation.

Soon as he ended, acclamations 'rose,
Endang'ring modesty and self-repose,
Till the good host his prudent counsel gave,
Then listen'd all, the flippant and the grave.
“ Let not applauses vanity inspire,
“ Deter humility, or damp desire ;
“ Neighbours we are, then let the stream run fair,
“ And every couplet be as free as air ;
“ Be silent when each speaker claims his right,
“ Enjoy the day as I enjoy the sight :
“ They shall not class us with the knavish elves,
“ Who banish shame, and criticise themselves.”

Thenceforward converse flow'd with perfect ease,
Midst country wit, and rustic repartees.
One drank to Ellen, if such might be found,
And archly glanced at female faces round.
If one with tilted can began to bawl,
Another cried, “ Remember Andrew Hall.”

Rustic Conversation.

Then, multifarious topics, corn and hay,
Vestry intrigues, the rates they had to pay,
The thriving stock, the lands too wet, too dry,
And all that bears on fruitful husbandry,
Ran mingling through the crowd—a crowd that might,
Transferr'd to canvas, give the world delight ;
A scene that WILKIE might have touch'd with pride—
The May-day banquet then had never died.

But who is he, uprisen, with eye so keen,
In garb of shining plush of grassy green—
Dogs climbing round him, eager for the start,
With ceaseless tail, and doubly beating heart ?
A stranger, who from distant forests came,
The sturdy keeper of the Oakly game.
Short prelude made, he pointed o'er the hill,
And raised a voice that every ear might fill ;
His heart was in his theme, and in the forest still.

The Forester.

THE FORESTER.

BORN in a dark wood's lonely dell,
Where echoes roar'd, and tendrils curl'd
Round a low cot, like hermit's cell,
Old Salcey Forest was my world.
I felt no bonds, no shackles then,
For life in freedom was begun ;
I gloried in th' exploits of men,
And learn'd to lift my father's gun.

O what a joy it gave my heart !
Wild as a woodbine up I grew ;
Soon in his feats I bore a part,
And counted all the game he slew.
I learn'd the wiles, the shifts, the calls,
The language of each living thing ;
I mark'd the hawk that darting falls,
Or station'd spreads the trembling wing.

The Forester.

I mark'd the owl that silent flits,
The hare that feeds at eventide,
The upright rabbit, when he sits
And mocks you, ere he deigns to hide.
I heard the fox bark through the night,
I saw the rooks depart at morn,
I saw the wild deer dancing light,
And heard the hunter's cheering horn.

Mad with delight, I roam'd around
From morn to eve throughout the year,
But still, midst all I sought or found,
My favourites were the spotted deer.
The elegant, the branching brow,
The doe's clean limbs and eyes of love;
The fawn as white as mountain snow,
That glanced through fern and brier and grove.

The Forester.

One dark, autumnal, stormy day,
 The gale was up in all its might,
The roaring forest felt its sway,
 And clouds were scudding quick as light :
A ruthless crash, a hollow groan,
 Aroused each self-preserving start,
The kine in herds, the hare alone,
 And shagged colts that grazed apart.

Midst fears instinctive, wonder drew
 The boldest forward, gathering strength
As darkness lour'd, and whirlwinds blew,
 To where the ruin stretch'd his length.
The shadowing oak, the noblest stem
 That graced the forest's ample bound,
Had cast to earth his diadem ;
 His fractured limbs had delved the ground.

The Forester.

He lay, and still to fancy groan'd ;

He lay like Alfred when he died—

Alfred, a king by Heaven enthroned,

His age's wonder, England's pride !

Monarch of forests, great as good,

Wise as the sage,—thou heart of steel !

Thy name shall rouse the patriot's blood

As long as England's sons can feel.

From every lawn, and copse, and glade,

The timid deer in squadrons came,

And circled round their fallen shade

With all of language but its name.

Astonishment and dread withheld

The fawn and doe of tender years,

But soon a triple circle swell'd,

With rattling horns and twinkling ears.

The Forester.

Some in his root's deep cavern housed,
And seem'd to learn, and muse, and teach,
Or on his topmost foliage browsed,
That had for centuries mock'd their reach.
Winds in their wrath these limbs could crash,
This strength, this symmetry could mar;
A people's wrath can monarchs dash
From bigot throne or purple car.

When Fate's dread bolt in Claremont's bowers
Provoked its million tears and sighs,
A nation wept its fallen flowers,
Its blighted hopes, its darling prize.—
So mourn'd my antler'd friends awhile,
So dark, so dread, the fateful day;
So mourn'd the herd that knew no guile,
'Then turn'd disconsolate away!

The Forester.

Who then of language will be proud ?

Who arrogate that gift of Heaven ?

To wild herds when they bellow loud,

To all the forest-tribes 'tis given.

I 've heard a note from dale or hill

That lifted every head and eye ;

I 've heard a scream aloft, so shrill

That terror seized on all that fly.

Empires may fall, and nations groan,

Pride be thrown down, and power decay ;

Dark bigotry may rear her throne,

But science is the light of day.

Yet, while so low my lot is cast,

Through wilds and forests let me range ;

My joys shall pomp and power outlast—

The voice of nature cannot change.

John Armstrong.

A soberer feeling through the crowd he flung,
Claremont was uppermost on every tongue ;
But who can live on unavailing sighs ?
The inconsolable are not the wise.
Spirit, and youth, and worth, demand a tear—
That day was past, and sorrow was not here ;
Sorrow the contest dared not but refuse
'Gainst Oakly's open cellar and the muse.

Sir Ambrose cast his eye along the line,
Where many a cheerful face began to shine,
And, fixing on his man, cried, loud and clear,
“ What have you brought, John Armstrong? let us
hear.”

Forth stepp'd his shepherd ;—scauty locks of gray
Edged round a hat that seem'd to mock decay ;
Its loops, its bands, were from the purest fleece,
Spun on the hills in silence and in peace.

John Armstrong.

A staff he bore carved round with birds and flowers,
The hieroglyphics of his leisure hours ;
And rough-form'd animals of various name,
Not just like BEWICK'S, but they meant the same.
Nor these alone his whole attention drew,
He was a poet,—this Sir Ambrose knew,—
A strange one too ;—and now had penn'd a lay,
Harmless and wild, and fitting for the day.
No tragic tale on stilts ;—his mind had more
Of boundless frolic than of serious lore ;—
Down went his hat, his shaggy friend close by
Dozed on the grass, yet watch'd his master's eye.

The Shepherd's Dream :

THE SHEPHERD'S DREAM :

OR, FAIRIES' MASQUERADE.

I HAD folded my flock, and my heart was o'erflowing,
I loiter'd beside the small lake on the heath ;
The red sun, though down, left his drapery glowing,
And no sound was stirring, I heard not a breath :
I sat on the turf, but I meant not to sleep,
And gazed o'er that lake which for ever is new,
Where clouds over clouds appear'd anxious to peep
From this bright double sky with its pearl and its blue.

Forgetfulness, rather than slumber, it seem'd,
When in infinite thousands the fairies arose
All over the heath, and their tiny crests gleam'd
In mock'ry of soldiers, our friends and our foes.

Or, Fairies' Masquerade.

There a stripling went forth, half a finger's length
high,

And led a huge host to the north with a dash ;
Silver birds upon poles went before their wild cry,
While the monarch look'd forward, adjusting his sash.

Soon after a terrible bonfire was seen,
The dwellings of fairies went down in their ire ;
But from all I remember, I never could glean
Why the woodstack was burnt, or who set it on fire.
'The flames seem'd to rise o'er a deluge of snow,
That buried its thousands,—the rest ran away ;
For the hero had here overstrain'd his long bow,
Yet he honestly own'd the mishap of the day.

'Then the fays of the north like a hailstorm came on,
And follow'd him down to the lake in a riot,

The Shepherd's Dream :

Where they found a large stone which they fix'd him
upon,

And threaten'd, and coax'd him, and bade him be quiet.
He that conquer'd them all, was to conquer no more,
But the million beheld he could conquer alone ;
After resting awhile, he leap'd boldly on shore,
When away ran a fay that had mounted his throne.

'Twas pleasant to see how they stared, how they
scamper'd,

By furze-bush, by fern, by no obstacle stay'd,
And the few that held council were terribly hamper'd,
For some were vindictive, and some were afraid.
I saw they were dress'd for a masquerade train,
Colour'd rags upon sticks they all brandish'd in view,
And of such idle things they seem'd mightily vain,
Though they nothing display'd but a bird split in two.

or, Fairies' Masquerade.

Then out rush'd the stripling in battle array,
And both sides determin'd to fight and to maul :
Death rattled his jawbones to see such a fray,
And glory personified laugh'd at them all.
Here he fail'd,—hence he fled, with a few for his sake,
And leap'd into a cockle-shell floating hard by ;
It sail'd to an isle in the midst of the lake,
Where they mock'd fallen greatness, and left him to die.

Meanwhile the north fairies stood round in a ring,
Supporting his rival on guns and on spears,
Who, though not a soldier, was robed like a king ;
Yet some were exulting, and some were in tears.
A lily triumphantly floated above,
The crowd press'd, and wrangling was heard through
the whole ;
Some soldiers look'd surly, some citizens strove
To hoist the old nightcap on liberty's pole.

The Shepherd's Dream.

But methought in my dream some bewail'd him that fell,
And liked not his victors so gallant, so clever,
Till a fairy stepp'd forward, and blew through a shell,
“ Bear misfortune with firmness, you'll triumph for
ever.”

I woke at the sound, all in silence, alone,
The moor-hens were floating like specks on a glass,
The dun clouds were spreading, the vision was gone,
And my dog scamper'd round 'midst the dew on the
grass.

I took up my staff, as a knight would his lance,
And said, “ Here 's my sceptre, my baton, my spear,
“ And there 's my prime minister far in advance,
“ Who serves me with truth for his food by the year.”
So I slept without care till the dawning of day,
Then trimm'd up my woodbines and whistled amain ;
My minister heard as he bounded away,
And we led forth our sheep to their pastures again.

The Soldier's Home.

Scorch'd by the shadeless sun on Indian plains,
Mellow'd by age, by wants, and toils, and pains,
Those toils still lengthen'd when he reach'd that shore
Where Spain's bright mountains heard the cannons
 roar,

A pension'd veteran, doom'd no more to roam,
With glowing heart thus sung the joys of home.

THE SOLDIER'S HOME.

My untried muse shall no high tone assume,
Nor strut in arms ;—farewell my cap and plume :
Brief be my verse, a task within my power,
I tell my feelings in one happy hour ;
But what an hour was that ! when from the main
I reach'd this lovely valley once again !
A glorious harvest fill'd my eager sight,
Half shock'd, half waving in a flood of light ;

The Soldier's Home.

On that poor cottage roof where I was born
The sun look'd down as in life's early morn.
I gazed around, but not a soul appear'd,
I listen'd on the threshold, nothing heard ;
I call'd my father thrice, but no one came ;
It was not fear or grief that shook my frame,
But an o'erpowering sense of peace and home,
Of toils gone by, perhaps of joys to come.
The door invitingly stood open wide,
I shook my dust, and set my staff aside.
How sweet it was to breathe that cooler air,
And take possession of my father's chair !
Beneath my elbow, on the solid frame,
Appear'd the rough initials of my name,
Cut forty years before !—the same old clock
Struck the same bell, and gave my heart a shock
I never can forget. A short breeze sprung,
And while a sigh was trembling on my tongue,

The Soldier's Home.

Caught the old dangling almanacks behind,
And up they flew, like banners in the wind ;
Then gently, singly, down, down, down, they went,
And told of twenty years that I had spent
Far from my native land :—that instant came
A robin on the threshold ; though so tame,
At first he look'd distrustful, almost shy,
And cast on me his coal-black stedfast eye,
And seem'd to say (past friendship to renew)
“ Ah ha ! old worn-out soldier, is it you ? ”
Through the room ranged the imprison'd humble bee,
And bomb'd, and bounced, and struggled to be free,
Dashing against the panes with sullen roar,
That threw their diamond sunlight on the floor ;
That floor, clean sanded, where my fancy stray'd
O'er undulating waves the broom had made,
Reminding me of those of hideous forms
That met us as we pass'd the *Cape of Storms*,

The Soldier's Home.

Where high and loud they break, and peace comes
never ;

They roll and foam, and roll and foam for ever.

But *here* was peace, that peace which home can yield ;

The grasshopper, the partridge in the field,

And ticking clock, were all at once become

The substitutes for clarion, fife, and drum.

While thus I mused, still gazing, gazing still

On beds of moss that spread the window sill,

I deem'd no moss my eyes had ever seen

Had been so lovely, brilliant, fresh, and green,

And guess'd some infant hand had placed it there,

And prized its hue, so exquisite, so rare.

Feelings on feelings mingling, doubling rose,

My heart felt every thing but calm repose ;

I could not reckon minutes, hours, nor years,

But rose at once, and bursted into tears ;

The Soldier's Home.

Then, like a fool, confused, sat down again,
And thought upon the past with shame and pain ;
I raved at war and all its horrid cost,
And glory's quagmire, where the brave are lost.
On carnage, fire, and plunder, long I mused,
And cursed the murdering weapons I had used.

Two shadows then I saw, two voices heard,
One bespoke age, and one a child's appear'd.—
In stepp'd my father with convulsive start,
And in an instant clasp'd me to his heart.
Close by him stood a little blue-eyed maid,
And, stooping to the child, the old man said,
“ Come hither, Nancy, kiss me once again ;
“ This is your uncle Charles, come home from Spain.”
The child approach'd, and with her fingers light,
Stroked my old eyes, almost deprived of sight.—

The Soldier's Home.

But why thus spin my tale, thus tedious be ?
Happy old Soldier ! what 's the world to me ?

Change is essential to the youthful heart,
It cannot bound, it cannot act its part
To one monotonous delight a slave ;
E'en the proud poet's lines become its grave :
By innate buoyancy, by passion led,
It acts instinctively, it will be fed.
A troop of country lasses paced the green,
'Tired of their seats, and anxious to be seen ;
'They pass'd Sir Ambrose, turn'd, and pass'd again,
Some lightly tripp'd, to make their meaning plain :
The old man knew it well, the thoughts of youth
Came o'er his mind like consciousness of truth,
Or like a sunbeam through a lowering sky,
It gave him youth again, and ecstasy ;

The Dance.

He joy'd to see them in this favourite spot,
Who of fourscore, or fifty score, would not ?
He wink'd, he nodded, and then raised his hand,—
'Twas seen and answer'd by the Oakly band.
Forth leap'd the light of heart and light of heel,
E'en stiff limb'd age the kindling joy could feel.
They form'd, while yet the music started light ;
The grass beneath their feet was short and bright,
Where thirty couple danced with all their might.
The Forester caught lasses one by one,
And twirl'd his glossy green against the sun ;
The Shepherd threw his doublet on the ground,
And clapp'd his hands, and many a partner found :
His hat-loops bursted in the jocund fray,
And floated o'er his head like blooming May.
Behind his heels his dog was barking loud,
And threading all the mazes of the crowd ;

Philip and Rosamond.

And had he boasted one had wagg'd his tail,
And plainly said, "What can my master ail?"
To which the Shepherd, had he been more cool,
Had only said, "'Tis Oakly feast, you fool."

But where was Philip, he who danced so well?
Had he retired, had pleasure broke her spell?
No, he had yielded to a tend'rer bond,
He sat beside his own sick Rosamond,
Whose illness long deferr'd their wedding hour;
She wept, and seem'd a lily in a shower;
She wept to see him 'midst a crowd so gay,
For her sake lose the honours of the day.
But could a gentle youth be so unkind?
Would Philip dance, and leave his girl behind?
She in her bosom hid a written prize,
Inestimably rich in Philip's eyes;

Philip and Rosamond.

The warm effusion of a heart that glow'd
With joy, with love, and hope by Heaven bestow'd.
He woo'd, he soothed, and every art assay'd,
To hush the scruples of the bashful maid,
Drawing, at length, against her weak command,
Reluctantly the treasure from her hand :
And would have read, but passion chain'd his tongue,
He turn'd aside, and down the ballad flung ;
And paused so long from feeling and from shame,
That old Sir Ambrose halloo'd him by name :
“ Bring it to me, my lad, and never fear,
“ I never blamed true love, or scorn'd a tear ;
“ They well become us, e'en where branded most.”
He came, and made a proxy of his host,
Who, as the dancers cooling join'd the throng,
Eyed the fair writer as he read her song.

Rosamond's Song of Hope.

ROSAMOND'S SONG OF HOPE.

SWEET Hope, so oft my childhood's friend,
I will believe thee still,
For thou canst joy with sorrow blend,
Where grief alone would kill.

When disappointments wrung my heart,
Ill brook'd in tender years,
Thou, like a sun, perform'dst thy part,
And dried my infant tears.

When late I wore the bloom of health,
And love had bound me fast,
My buoyant heart would sigh by stealth
For fear it might not last.

Rosamond's Song of Hope.

My sickness came, my bloom decay'd,
But Philip still was by ;
And thou, sweet Hope, so kindly said,
“ He 'll weep if thou should'st die.”

Thou told'st me too, that genial Spring
Would bring me health again ;
I feel its power, but cannot sing
Its glories yet for pain.

But thou canst still my heart inspire,
And Heaven can strength renew ;
I feel thy presence, holy fire !
My Philip will be true.

All eyes were turn'd, all hearts with pity glow'd,
The maid stood trembling, and the lover bow'd

The Yeoman.

As rose around them, while she dried her tears,
“ Long life to Rosamond, and happy years !”

Scarce had the voices ceased, when forth there came
Another candidate for village fame :
By gratitude to Heaven, by honest pride,
Impell'd to rise and cast his doubts aside,
A sturdy yeoman, button'd to the throat,
Faced the whole ring, and shook his leathern coat.
“ I have a tale of private life to tell,
“ 'Tis all of self and home, I know it well ;
“ In love and honour's cause I would be strong,
“ Mine is a father's tale, perhaps too long,
“ For fathers, when a dutious child 's the theme,
“ Can talk a summer's sun down, and then dream
“ Of retrospective joys with hearts that glow
“ With feelings such as parents only know.”

Alfred and Jennet.

ALFRED AND JENNET.

YES, let me tell of Jennet, my last child ;
In her the charms of all the rest ran wild,
And sprouted as they pleased. Still by my side,
I own she was my favourite, was my pride,
Since first she labour'd round my neck to twine,
Or clasp'd both little hands in one of mine :
And when the season broke, I 've seen her bring
Lapfuls of flowers, and then the girl would sing
Whole songs, and halves, and bits, O, with such glee
If playmates found a favourite, it was she.
Her lively spirit lifted her to joy ;
To distance in the race a clumsy boy
Would raise the flush of conquest in her eye,
And all was dance, and laugh, and liberty.

Alfred and Jennet.

Yet not hard-hearted, take me right, I beg,
The veriest romp that ever wagg'd a leg
Was Jennet ; but when pity soothed her mind,
Prompt with her tears, and delicately kind.
The half-fledged nestling, rabbit, mouse, or dove,
By turns engaged her cares and infant love ;
And many a one, at the last doubtful strife,
Warm'd in her bosom, started into life.

At thirteen she was all that Heaven could send,
My nurse, my faithful clerk, my lively friend ;
Last at my pillow when I sunk to sleep,
First on my threshold soon as day could peep :
I heard her happy to her heart's desire,
With clanking pattens, and a roaring fire.
Then, having store of new-laid eggs to spare,
She fill'd her basket with the simple fare,

Alfred and Jennet.

And weekly trudged (I think I see her still)
To sell them at yon house upon the hill.
Oft have I watch'd her as she stroll'd along,
Heard the gate bang, and heard her morning song ;
And, as my warm ungovern'd feelings rose,
Said to myself, " Heaven bless her ! there she goes."
Long would she tarry, and then dancing home,
Tell how the lady bade her oft'ner come,
And bade her talk and laugh without control ;
For Jennet's voice was music to the soul,
My tale shall prove it:—For there dwelt a son,
An only child, and where there is but one,
Indulgence like a mildew reigns, from whence
Mischief may follow if that child wants sense.
But Alfred was a youth of noble mind,
With ardent passions, and with taste refined ;
All that could please still courted heart and hand,
Music, joy, peace, and wealth, at his command ;

Alfred and Jennet.

Wealth, which his widow'd mother deem'd his own ;
Except the poor, she lived for him alone.
Yet would she weep by stealth when he was near,
But check'd all sighs to spare his wounded ear ;
For from his cradle he had never seen
Soul-cheering sunbeams, or wild nature's green.
But all life's blessings centre not in sight ;
For Providence, that dealt him one long night,
Had given, in pity to the blooming boy,
Feelings more exquisitely tuned to joy.
Fond to excess was he of all that grew ;
'The morning blossom sprinkled o'er with dew,
Across his path, as if in playful freak,
Would dash his brow, and weep upon his cheek ;
Each varying leaf that brush'd where'er he came,
Press'd to his rosy lip he call'd by name ;
He grasp'd the saplings, measured every bough,
Inhaled the fragrance that the spring months throw

Alfred and Jennet.

Profusely round, till his young heart confess'd
That all was beauty, and himself was bless'd.
Yet when he traced the wide extended plain,
Or clear brook side, he felt a transient pain ;
The keen regret of goodness, void of pride,
To think he could not roam without a guide.

Who, guess ye, knew these scenes of home delight
Better than Jennet, bless'd with health and sight ?
Whene'er she came, he from his sports would slide,
And catch her wild laugh, listening by her side ;
Mount to the tell-tale clock with ardent spring,
And *feel* the passing hour, then fondly cling
To Jennet's arm, and tell how sweet the breath
Of bright May-mornings on the open heath ;
Then off they started, rambling far and wide,
Like Cupid with a wood-nymph by his side.

Alfred and Jennet.

Thus months and months roll'd on, the summer pass'd,
And the long darkness, and the winter blast,
Sever'd the pair ; no flowery fields to roam,
Poor Alfred sought his music and his home. —
What wonder then if inwardly he pined ?
The anxious mother mark'd her stripling's mind
Gloomy and sad, yet striving to be gay
As the long tedious evenings pass'd away :
'Twas her delight fresh spirits to supply.—
My girl was sent for—just for company.

A tender governess my daughter found,
Her temper placid, her instruction sound ;
Plain were her precepts, full of strength, their power
Was founded on the practice of the hour :
Theirs were the happy nights to peace resign'd,
With ample means to cheer th' unbended mind.

Alfred and Jennet.

The Sacred History, or the volumes fraught
With tenderest sympathy, or towering thought,
The laughter-stirring tale, the moral lay,
All that brings dawning reason into day.
There Jennet learn'd by maps, through every land
To travel, and to name them at command ;
Would tell how great their strength, their bounds how
far,

And show where uncle Charles was in the war.
The globe she managed with a timid hand,
'Told which was ocean, which was solid land,
And said, whate'er their diff'rent climates bore,
All still roll'd round, though that I knew before.

Thus grown familiar, and at perfect ease,
What could be Jennet's duty but to please ?
Yet hitherto she kept, scarce knowing why,
One powerful charm reserved, and still was shy.

Alfred and Jennet.

When Alfred from his grand-piano drew
Those heavenly sounds that seem'd for ever new,
She sat as if to sing would be a crime,
And only gazed with joy, and nodded time.
Till one snug evening, I myself was there,
The whispering lad inquired, behind my chair,
“ Bowman, can Jennet sing ? ” “ At home,” said I,
“ She sings from morn till night, and seems to fly
“ From tune to tune, the sad, the wild, the merry,
“ And moulds her lip to suit them like a cherry;
“ She learn'd them here.”—“ O ho ! ” said he, “ O ho ! ”
And rubb'd his hands, and stroked his forehead, so.
Then down he sat, sought out a tender strain,
Sung the first words, then struck the chords again ;
“ Come, Jennet, help me, you *must* know this song
“ Which I have sung, and you have heard so long.”
I mark'd the palpitation of her heart,
Yet she complied, and strove to take a part,

Alfred and Jennet.

But faint and fluttering, swelling by degrees,
Ere self-composure gave that perfect ease,
The soul of song :—then, with triumphant glee,
Resting her idle work upon her knee,
Her little tongue soon fill'd the room around
With such a voluble and magic sound,
That, 'spite of all her pains to persevere,
She stopp'd to sigh, and wipe a starting tear ;
Then roused herself for faults to make amends,
While Alfred trembled to his fingers' ends.
But when this storm of feeling sunk to rest,
Jennet, resuming, sung her very best,
And on the ear, with many a dying fall,
She pour'd th' enchanting “ Harp of Tara's Hall.”
Still Alfred hid his raptures from her view,
Still touch'd the keys, those raptures to renew,
And led her on to that sweet past'ral air,
The Highland Laddie with the yellow hair.

Alfred and Jennet.

She caught the sound, and with the utmost ease
Bade nature's music triumph, sure to please :
Such truth, such warmth, such tenderness express'd,
That my old heart was dancing in my breast.
Up sprung the youth, " O Jennet, where's your hand ?
" " There's not another girl in all the land,
" If she could bring me empires, bring me sight,
" Could give me such unspeakable delight :
" You little baggage ! not to tell before
" That you could sing ; mind—you go home no more."

Thus I have seen her from my own fire-side
Attain the utmost summit of her pride ;
For, from that singing hour, as time roll'd round,
At the great house my Jennet might be found,
And, while I watch'd her progress with delight,
She had a father's blessing every night,

Alfred and Jennet.

And grew in knowledge at that moral school
Till I began to guess myself a fool.
Music ! why she could play as well as he !
At least I thought so,—but we'll let that be :
She read the poets, grave and light, by turns,
And talk'd of Cowper's "Task," and Robin Burns ;
Nay, read without a book, as I may say,
As much as some could within half a day.
'Twas thus I found they pass'd their happy time,
In all their walks, when nature in her prime
Spread forth her scents and hues, and whisper'd love
And joy to every bird in every grove ;
And though their colours could not meet his eye,
She pluck'd him flowers, then talk'd of poetry.

Once on a sunbright morning, 'twas in June,
I felt my spirits and my hopes in tune,

Alfred and Jennet.

And idly rambled forth, as if t' explore
The little valley just before my door ;
Down by yon dark green oak I found a seat
Beneath the clustering thorns, a snug retreat
For poets, as I deem'd, who often prize
Such holes and corners far from human eyes ;
I mark'd young Alfred, led by Jennet, stray
Just to the spot, both chatting on their way :
They came behind me, I was still unseen ;
He was the elder, Jennet was sixteen.
My heart misgave me, lest I should be deem'd
A prying listener, never much esteem'd,
But this fear soon subsided, and I said,
“ I'll hear this blind lad and my little maid.”
That instant down she pluck'd a woodbine wreath,
The loose leaves rattled on my head beneath ;
This was for Alfred, which he seized with joy,
“ O, thank you, Jennet,” said the generous boy.

Alfred and Jennet.

Much was their talk, which many a theme supplied,
As down they sat, for every blade was dried.
I would have skulk'd away, but dare not move,
“ Besides,” thought I, “ they will not talk of love ;”
But I was wrong, for Alfred, with a sigh,
A little tremulous, a little shy,
But, with the tenderest accents, ask'd his guide
A question which might touch both love and pride.
“ This morning, Jennet, why did you delay,
“ And talk to that strange clown upon your way,
“ Our homespun gardener ? how can you bear
“ His screech-owl tones upon your perfect ear ?
“ I cannot like that man, yet know not why,
“ He 's surely quite as old again as I ;
“ He 's ignorant, and cannot be your choice,
“ And ugly too, I 'm certain, by his voice,
“ Besides, he call'd you pretty.”—“ Well, what then ?
“ I cannot hide my face from all the men ;

Alfred and Jennet.

“ Alfred, indeed, indeed, you are deceived,
“ He never spoke a word that I believed ;
“ Nay, can he think that I would leave a home
“ Full of enjoyment, present, and to come,
“ While your dear mother’s favours daily prove
“ How sweet the bonds of gratitude and love ?
“ No, while beneath her roof I shall remain,
“ I ’ll never vex you, never give you pain.”
“ Enough, my life,” he cried, and up they sprung ;
By Heaven, I almost wish’d that I was young ;
It was a dainty sight to see them pass,
Light as the July fawns upon the grass,
Pure as the breath of spring when forth it spreads,
Love in their hearts, and sunshine on their heads.

Next day I felt what I was bound to do,
To weigh the adventure well, and tell it too ;

Alfred and Jennet.

For Alfred's mother must not be beguiled,
He was her earthly hope, her only child ;
I had no wish, no right to pass it by,
It might bring grief, perhaps calamity.
She was the judge, and she alone should know
Whether to check the flame or let it grow.
I went with fluttering heart, and moisten'd eye,
But strong in truth, and arm'd for her reply.
“ Well, master Bowman, why that serious face ? ”
Exclaim'd the lovely dame, with such a grace,
That had I knelt before her, I had been
Not quite the simplest votary ever seen.
I told my tale, and urged that well-known truth,
That the soft passion in the bloom of youth
Starts into power, and leads th' unconscious heart
A chase where reason takes but little part ;
Nothing was more in nature, or more pure,
And from their habits nothing was more sure

Alfred and Jennet.

Whether the lady blush'd from pride or joy,
I could but guess ;—at length she said—“ My boy
“ Dropp'd not a syllable of this to me !
“ What was I doing, that I could not see ?
“ Through all the anxious hours that I have known,
“ His welfare still was dearer than my own ;
“ How have I mourn'd o'er his unhappy fate !
“ Blind as he is ! the heir to my estate !
“ I now might break his heart, and Jennet's too ;
“ What must I, Bowman, or what can I do ?”—
“ Do, madam ?” said I boldly, “ if you trace
“ Impending degradation or disgrace
“ In this attachment, let us not delay ;
“ Send my girl home, and check it while you may.”
“ I will,” she said, but the next moment sigh'd ;
Parental love was struggling hard with pride.

I left her thus, deep musing, and soon found
My daughter, for I traced her by the sound

Alfred and Jennet.

Of Alfred's flageolet ; no cares had they,
But in the garden bower spent half the day.
By starts he sung, then wildest trillings made,
To mock a piping blackbird in the glade.
I turn'd a corner and approach'd the pair ;
My little rogue had roses in her hair !
She whipp'd them out, and with a downcast look,
Conquer'd a laugh by poring on her book.
My object was to talk with her aside,
But at the sight my resolution died ;
They look'd so happy in their blameless glee,
That, as I found them, I e'en let them be ;
Though Jennet promised a few social hours
'Midst her old friends, my poultry, and my flowers.
She came,—but not till fatal news had wrung
Her heart through sleepless hours, and chain'd her
tongue.

Alfred and Jennet.

She came, but with a look that gave me pain,
For, though bright sunbeams sparkled after rain,
Though every brood came round, half run, half fly,
I knew her anguish by her alter'd eye ;
And strove, with all my power, where'er she came,
To soothe her grief, yet gave it not a name.
At length a few sad bitter tears she shed,
And on both hands reclined her aching head.
'Twas then my time the conqueror to prove,
I summon'd all my rhetoric, all my love.
" Jennet, you must not think to pass through life
" Without its sorrows, and without its strife ;
" Good, dutiful, and worthy, as you are,
" You must have griefs, and you must learn to bear."
Thus I went on, trite moral truths to string,—
All chaff, mere chaff, where love has spread his wing :
She cared not, listen'd not, nor seem'd to know
What was my aim, but wiped her burning brow,

Alfred and Jennet.

Where sat more eloquence and living power
Than language could embody in an hour.
With soften'd tone I mention'd Alfred's name,
His wealth, our poverty, and that sad blame
Which would have weigh'd me down, had I not told
The secret which I dare not keep for gold,
Of Alfred's love, o'erheard the other morn,
The gardener, and the woodbine, and the thorn ;
And added, " Though the lady sends you home,
" You are but young, child, and a day may come"—
" She has *not* sent me home," the girl replied,
And rose with sobs of passion from my side ;
" She has *not* sent me home, dear father, no ;
" She gives me leave to tarry or to go ;
" She has not *blamed* me,—yet she weeps no less,
" And every tear but adds to my distress ;
" I am the cause,—thus all that she has done
" Will bring the death or misery of her son.

Alfred and Jennet.

“ Jealous he might be, could he but have seen
“ How other lads approach’d where I have been ;
“ But this man’s voice offends his very soul,
“ That strange antipathy brooks no control ;
“ And should I leave him now, or seem unkind,
“ The thought would surely wreck his noble mind ;
“ To leave him thus, and in his utmost need !
“ Poor Alfred ! then you will be blind indeed !
“ I will not leave him.”—“ Nay, child, do not rave ;
“ What, would you be his menial, be his slave ?”
“ Yes,” she exclaim’d, and wiped each streaming eye,
“ Yes, be his slave, and serve him till I die ;
“ He is too just to act the tyrant’s part,
“ He ’s truth itself.” O how my burthen’d heart
Sigh’d for relief !—soon that relief was found ;
Without one word we traced the meadow round,
Her feverish hand in mine, and weigh’d the case,
Nor dared to look each other in the face ;

Alfred and Jennet.

Till, with a sudden stop, as if from fear,
I roused her sinking spirit, "Who comes here?"
Down the green slope before us, glowing warm,
Came Alfred, tugging at his mother's arm;
Willing she seem'd, but he still led the way,
She had not walk'd so fast for many a day;
His hand was lifted, and his brow was bare,
For now no clust'ring ringlets wanton'd there,
He threw them back in anger and in spleen,
And shouted "Jennet" o'er the daisied green.
Boyish impatience strove with manly grace
In ev'ry line and feature of his face;
His claim appear'd resistless as his choice,
And when he caught the sound of Jennet's voice,
And when with spotless soul he clasp'd the maid,
My heart exulted while my breath was staid.
"Jennet, we must not part! return again;
"What have I done to merit all this pain?"

Alfred and Jennet.

“ Dear mother, share my fortune with the poor,
“ Jennet is mine, and *shall* be—say no more ;
“ Bowman, you know not what a friend I ’ll be ;
“ Give me your daughter, Bowman, give her me ;
“ Jennet, what will my days be if you go ?
“ A dreary darkness, and a life of woe :
“ My dearest love, come *home*, and do not cry ;
“ You are my daylight, Jennet, I shall die.”

To such appeals all prompt replies are cold,
And stately prudence snaps her cobweb hold.
Had the good widow tried, or wish’d to speak,
This was a bond she could not, dared not break ;
Their hearts (you never saw their likeness, never)
Were join’d, indissolubly join’d for ever.

Why need I tell how soon our tears were dried,
How Jennet blush’d, how Alfred with a stride
Bore off his prize, and fancied every charm,
And clipp’d against his ribs her trembling arm ;

Alfred and Jennet.

How mute we seniors stood, our power all gone ?
Completely conquer'd, Love the day had won,
And the young vagrant triumph'd in our plight,
And shook his roguish plumes, and laugh'd outright.
Yet, by my life and hopes, I would not part
With this sweet recollection from my heart ;
I would not now forget that tender scene
To wear a crown, or make my girl a queen.
Why need be told how pass'd the months along,
How sped the summer's walk, the winter's song,
How the foil'd suitor all his hopes gave up,
How Providence with rapture fill'd their cup ?
No dark regrets, no tragic scenes to prove,
The gardener was too old to die for love.
A thousand incidents I cast aside
To tell but one—I gave away the bride—
Gave the dear youth what kings could not have given ;
Then bless'd them both, and put my trust in Heaven.

Conclusion.

There the old neighbours laugh'd the night away,
Who talk of Jennet's wedding to this day.
And could you but have seen the modest grace,
The half-hid smiles that play'd in Jennet's face,
Or mark'd the bridegroom's bounding heart o'erflow,
You might have wept for joy, as I could now :
I speak from memory of days long past ;
Though 'tis a father's tale, I've done at last.

Here rest thee, rest thee, Muse, review the scene
Where thou with me from peep of dawn hast been :
We did not promise that this motley throng
Should every *one* supply a votive song,
Nor every tenant :—yet thou hast been kind,
For untold tales must still remain behind,
Which might o'er listening patience still prevail,
Did fancy waver not, nor daylight fail.

Conclusion.

“ The Soldier’s Wife,” her toils, his battles o’er,
“ Love in a Shower,” the riv’let’s sudden roar ;
Then, “ Lines to Aggravation” form the close,
Parent of murders, and the worst of woes.
But while the changeful hours of daylight flew,
Some homeward look’d, and talk’d of evening dew ;
Some watch’d the sun’s decline, and stroll’d around,
Some wish’d another dance, and partners found ;
When in an instant every eye was drawn
To one bright object on the upper lawn ;
A fair procession from the mansion came,
Unknown its purport, and unknown its aim.
No gazer could refrain, no tongue could cease,
It seem’d an embassy of love and peace.
Nearer and nearer still approach’d the train,
Age in the van transform’d to youth again.
Sir Ambrose gazed, and scarce believed his eyes ;
’Twas magic, memory, love, and blank surprise,

Conclusion.

For there his venerable lady wore
The very dress which, sixty years before,
Had sparkled on her sunshine bridal morn,
Had sparkled, ay, beneath this very thorn !
Her hair was snowy white, o'er which was seen,
Emblem of what her bridal cheeks had been,
A twin red rose—no other ornament
Had pride suggested, or false feeling lent ;
She came to grace the triumph of her lord,
And pay him honours at his festive board.
Nine ruddy lasses follow'd where she stepp'd ;
White were their virgin robes, that lightly swept
The downy grass ; in every laughing eye
Cupid had skulk'd, and written " victory."
What heart on earth its homage could refuse ?
Each tripp'd, unconsciously, a blushing Muse.
A slender chaplet of fresh blossoms bound
Their clustering ringlets in a magic round.

Conclusion.

And, as they slowly moved across the green,
Each in her beauty seem'd a May-day queen.
The first a wreath bore in her outstretch'd hand,
The rest a single rose upon a wand ;
Their steps were measured to that grassy throne
Where, watching them, Sir Ambrose sat alone.
They stopp'd,—when she, the foremost of the row,
Curtsied, and placed the wreath upon his brow ;
The rest, in order pacing by his bower,
In the loop'd wreath left each her single flower,—
Then stood aside.—What broke the scene's repose ?
The whole assembly clapp'd their hands and rose.
The Muses charm'd them as they form'd a ring,
And look'd the very life and soul of Spring !
But still the white hair'd dame they view'd with pride,
Her love so perfect, and her truth so tried.
Oh, sweet it is to hear, to see, to name,
Unquench'd affection in the palsied frame—

Conclusion.

To think upon the boundless raptures past,
And love, triumphant, conquering to the last !

Silenced by feeling, vanquish'd by his tears,
The host sprung up, nor felt the weight of years ;
Yet utterance found not, though in virtue's cause,
But acclamations fill'd up nature's pause,
Till, by one last and vigorous essay,
His tide of feeling roll'd itself away ;
The language of delight its bondage broke,
And many a warm heart bless'd him as he spoke.

“ Neighbours and friends, by long experience proved,
“ Pardon this weakness ; I was too much moved :
“ My dame, you see, can youth and age insnare,
“ In vain I strove, 'twas more than I could bear,—
“ Yet hear me,—though the tyrant passions strive,
“ The words of truth, like leading stars, survive ;

Conclusion.

“ I thank you all, but will accomplish more—
“ Your verses shall not die as heretofore ;
“ Your local tales shall not be thrown away,
“ Nor war remain the theme of every lay.
“ Ours is an humbler task, that may release
“ The high-wrought soul, and mould it into peace.
“ These pastoral notes some victor’s ear may fill,
“ Breathed amidst blossoms, where the drum is still :
“ I purpose then to send them forth to try
“ The public patience, or its apathy.
“ The world shall see them ; why should I refrain ?
“ ’Tis all the produce of my own domain.
“ Farewell !” he said, then took his lady’s arm,
On his shrunk hand her starting tears fell warm ;
Again he turn’d to view the happy crowd,
And cried, “ Good night, good night, good night,”
aloud,

Conclusion.

“ Health to you all ! for see, the evening closes,”
Then march’d to rest, beneath his crown of roses.
“ Happy old man ! with feelings such as these,
“ The seasons all can charm, and trifles please.”
An instantaneous shout re-echoed round,
’Twas wine and gratitude inspired the sound :
Some joyous souls resumed the dance again,
The aged loiter’d o’er the homeward plain,
And scatter’d lovers rambled through the park,
And breathed their vows of honour in the dark ;
Others a festal harmony preferr’d,
Still round the thorn the jovial song was heard ;
Dance, rhymes, and fame, they scorn’d such things as
these,
But drain’d the mouldy barrel to its lees,
As if ’twere worse than shame to want repose :
Nor was the lawn clear till the moon arose,

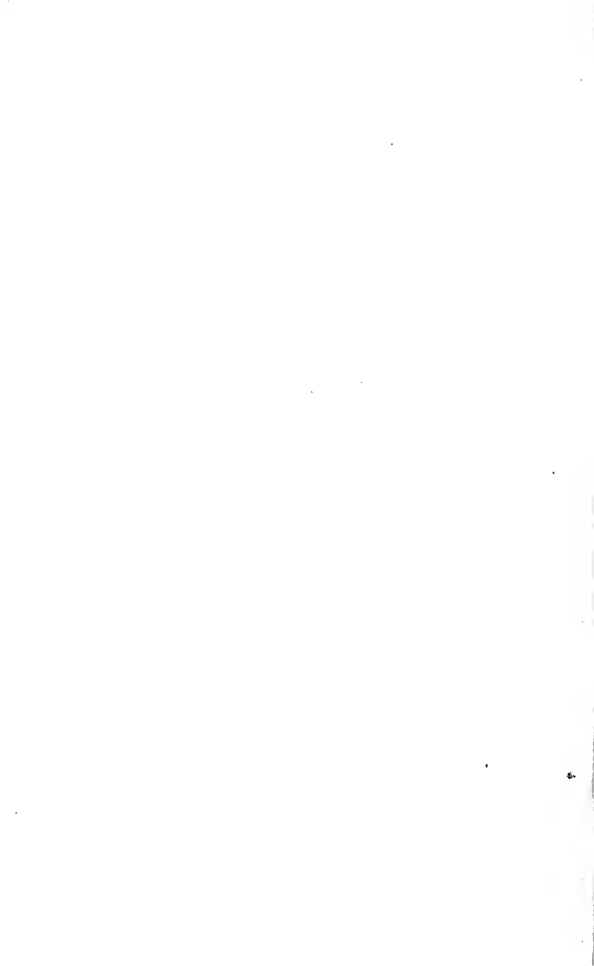
Conclusion.

And on each turret pour'd a brilliant gleam
Of modest light, that trembled on the stream ;
The owl awoke, but dared not yet complain,
And banish'd silence re-assumed her reign.

THE END.

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